MARXISM TODAY

THEORETICAL AND DISCUSSION JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

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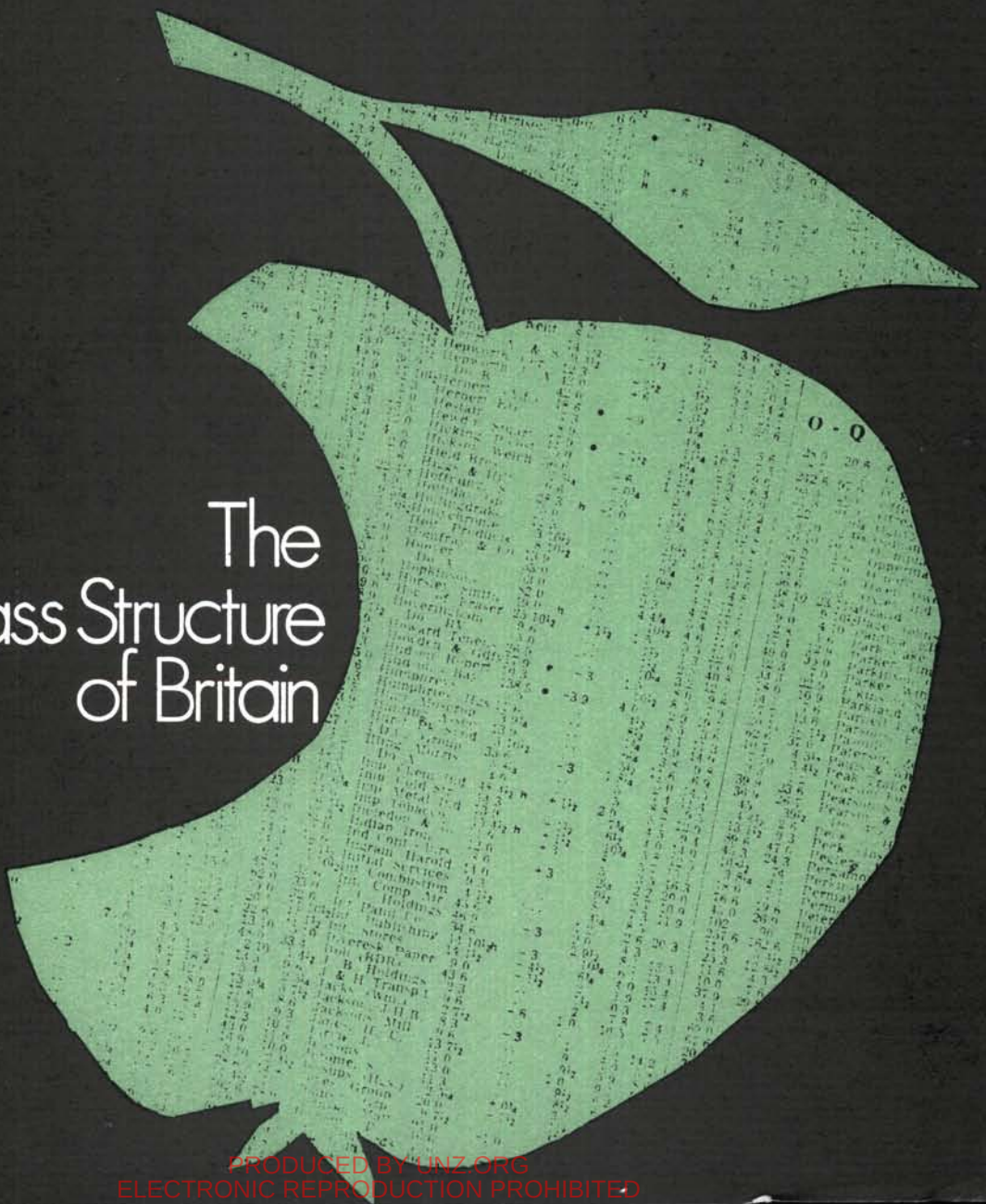

The Class Structure of Britain

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MARXISM TODAY

THEORETICAL AND DISCUSSION JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Volume 14 Number 6

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Editorial Comments

"BRITAIN'S industrial future", Mr. Wedgwood Benn recently told a Press Gallery lunch, "is being partly shaped by huge international companies with their headquarters in Detroit or Eindhoven or Tokyo". And it is not only Britain's *industrial* future.

In this connection we would recommend our readers to study the evidence submitted by the Communist Party to the Commission on the Constitution.[1]

For the giant national and international firms, which more and more dominate British economy, are to an ever increasing extent dictating government policy.

The evidence outlines some of the methods by which this is done. The giant firms, it says:

> "have lines of entry to the higher circles of the ministries on which they depend, and there is an inter-change of personnel between Civil Service and private firms. Connections are particularly strong in ministries associated with economic policies and the placing of contracts. Through the Confederation of British Industries and other channels, the big firms have direct access to Cabinet Ministers".

The Confederation of British Industries is claiming industry's right "to be directly included in the machinery of government," and demanding places for industry on the provincial councils recommended by the Maud Commission.

Long ago Lenin (in *The Caricature of Marxism*) explained how monopoly capitalism would inevitably attack even that limited democracy which the people, in long and complex struggle, had won under capitalism. Now, in these days of giant firms, supergiant firms and supranational firms, the attack is heavily under way.

We shall be returning to this again and again in the columns of *Marxism Today*. We hope to publish in a future issue, under the title of "In Defence of Democracy", a study by Nora Jeffery, on this important issue.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN CHILE

Senator Luis Corvalan, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Chile, was asked by *Prensa Latina* what he thought were the prospects of the "Unidad Popular" (People's Unity) in the forthcoming Presidential Elections.

The groups which belong to Unidad Popular, he replied:

> "have adopted a program responding to the real need for revolutionary changes which the majority of Chileans favour. They have, in addition, strong, broad ties among the masses and several of them have solid organisation and great capacity for action".

A sector of voters who now support the Christian Democratic Party, Corvalan predicted, is likely to leave that Party and support the Unidad Popular as it becomes more powerful.

Asked whether he considered that power would be handed over to the Unidad Popular if it should win the elections he replied:

> "Of course it can be taken for granted that a sector of the right and imperialism will—in the event of an Unidad Popular victory—use any means to prevent the creation of a popular government or to overthrow it. But it can also be taken for granted that the people will hardly remain passive".

He warned of the danger of activities of military circles against the left during or after the elections:

> "Last October's military events might be just the preface to other similar acts. Consequently the electoral or post-electoral process may be threatened by this kind of interference".

But here, too, he added:

> "*You must not underestimate the watchful, anti-coup activity of the people, which has already been put to the test*".

DEVELOPMENTS IN WESTERN GERMANY

Important developments in Marxist research and scholarship can be reported from Western Germany. There has recently been established at Frankfurt-am-Main the Institute for Marxist Studies and Research (Institut fur Marxistische Studien und Forschungen—IMSF).

The Institute has just issued two important publications. One—which is to appear from time to time—is called *Marxismus Digest* (Digest of Marxist Writing) and it consists

[1] Published in *Comment* on April 25, 1970.

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of selected articles on particular subjects which have appeared in different Marxist journals throughout the world.

No. 1, 1970, of the *Digest,* is devoted to "State Monopoly Regulation of the Economy, Content, Forms, Methods", and contains articles which have appeared in Soviet, GDR, West German, American, French and Italian Marxist journals. These articles deal with questions such as "Regulation and Programming of the Capitalist Economy", "Essence, Possibilities and Limits of Economic Programming by the State", the experience of French Planification, capitalist reorganisation in Italy, and two articles (one by Victor Perlo) on problems and perspectives of the American economy.

From this issue it can be seen that the *Digest* will perform a most valuable service, making generally available the work and ideas of Marxists in many countries on some of the most important theoretical and practical questions of our time. Some means, however, will have to be found for issuing it in many more languages, especially in English, if the widest and most profitable use is to be made of it.

The second publication is called *The September Strikes, 1969 — Description - Analyses-Documents.* This deals with the strikes in the steel industry, in mining, in engineering and in other industries which took place in Western Germany in September of last year.

This is a work of the most detailed, painstaking and precise scholarship, in the best traditions of German Marxist writing. Each strike is discussed first of all in its political and economic setting, the place of the industry involved in the economy as a whole, the set-up in the industry itself as far as monopoly is concerned, the position of the workers, the immediate causes of the strikes. This is accompanied by a detailed account of the way the strike developed, the forms of action, the tactics of the workers on the shop floor, of their trade unions, their demands, the activity of the different political groupings and the political aspects of the struggle. And finally, the tactics of the employers and the way the strikes were ultimately ended.

An invaluable part of the book is the section devoted to documents. This consists of reproductions of circulars, statements, leaflets and factory papers issued by the various factory committees, shop stewards committees, trade union branches, Communist Party factory and pit branches, as well as statements by Social Democratic Party organisations along with reproductions of articles in various papers and statements made by the different employers involved.

Excerpts from the press and employer's statements have a familiar ring. "Wild-cat strikes", "ruin of the economy", "Communist subversion" etc., appear again and again.

What is most impressive, both in content and in technical presentation, are reproductions of the very many factory papers issued by factory branches of the newly established German Communist Party (DKP), as well as the leaflets issued by the local and district Party organisations involved.

The harsh class reality camouflaged beneath the propaganda of West German "prosperity" and of the "economic miracle" emerges most strikingly from this study.

The "hard working", "industrious", "disciplined", "orderly" German workers so often held up as models to the "strike-prone", work-shy", "couldn't-care-less" British workers, are shown to be—workers—courageously engaged like their brothers in every capitalist country, in ceaseless battles for decent wages, better working conditions, proper safety regulations.

This is a most valuable and interesting study of recent strike battles in Germany.

Mention should also be made of a third important source of Marxist writing and research. This is—*Marxistische Blätter,* a bi-monthly journal, established in 1963 which deals in depth with social, political, and economic problems.

From all this it can be seen that there have been great advances in the development of Marxist theory in Western Germany.[2]

THE STRUGGLE IN NAMIBIA

The South West African People's Organisation has now published the resolutions passed at its recent Consultative Congress held in Tanzania from December 26th, 1969 to January 2nd, 1970.

The Organisation has developed out of the Ovamboland People's Congress formed in 1957 by young workers from South West Africa, employed in Cape Town and the

[2] Readers interested in the work of the Institute should write to the Institut fur Marxistische Studien und Forschungen eV, 6 Frankfurt/Main, Liebigstrasse 6; and for *Marxistische Blätter* to Verlag Marxistische Blätter GmbH, 6 Frankfurt/Main 1, Meisengrasse 11; German Federal Republic.

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mining areas of South Africa. Two changes of name since then reflect its impressive growth. In 1958 the Congress became the Ovamboland People's Organisation, and in 1960, the South West African People's Organisation, SWAPO.

In the twelve years of its existence it has developed unity and activity inside the country. Its initial campaign abroad was aimed at rousing world opinion to end South Africa's United Nations Trusteeship over the territory. Inside the country it developed a widespread programme of political education to mobilise the people for the winning of independence.

The judgement of the International Court in favour of South Africa produced a new and more critical situation and the armed struggle for which preparations had been in hand for four years, was launched in August 1966, only eight days after the Court's decision was announced.

By the independence movement itself, the country is called *Namibia,* meaning a *shield,* because the desert coastal strip protected it for centuries from invasion by the Europeans. When imperialism finally descended on it in the form of German colonialism, resistance was met with savage slaughter and displacement of the people. After the 1918 war the country was declared an International Trusteeship Territory and was administered by South Africa on behalf of the British Government. The South Africans have always violated the trusteeship in treating the country as a colony, subjecting it to severe repression and apartheid conditions.

THREE YEARS OF ARMED STRUGGLE

600,000 people live in an area of 318,000 square miles. Africans make up 87 per cent of the total population but they own only 98,000 square miles of territory. The rest is owned by settlers. The country is enormously rich in mineral resources which as yet are not well developed, but its potential is fully appreciated by the international mining monopolies on whose behalf the South African Government operates. Consolidated Diamond Mines which controls 98 per cent of diamond output, makes £19 million profit per annum.

In reviewing the three years of armed struggle in Namibia, the President of SWAPO, Mr. Sam Nujoma, said:

"The people of Namibia have accepted armed struggle as the only way, and indeed the most effective way, to bring about the end of the South African racist regime in Namibia. For more than 40 years, we Namibians looked to the international community and especially to the United Nations Organisation for deliverance. But then, this changed. On the 26th of August 1966—the day when armed struggle was launched under the banner of SWAPO—we decided to take our destiny in our hands.

"Now three years have passed since then. In these three years we have made great strides towards the realisation of our final goal—which is the freedom and independence of our country. In those three years, we have gained much experience about the enemy and his methods, an experience which would be of decisive significance in the years ahead.

"The degree of our progress since the beginning of the armed struggle three years ago can best be measured in terms of the reaction by the South African Government. These are in a form of a series of laws, inhuman and draconian in nature, which aim at the suppression of the Namibian revolution.

"The first reaction of the racist government of South Africa, following the launching of the armed struggle, was to extend the Suppression of Communism Act. This was in November 1966. This was shortly followed, on 2nd December to be precise, by the arrest of top SWAPO leaders at home, many other members of the Party were also arrested.

"SWAPO freedom fighters were undeterred by this action. In fact, we carried the armed struggle aggressively forward. In a state of complete desperation, the racist Government of Vorster made its next move. This was the passage, in July 1967, of the Anti-Terrorism Act. This Act, which was specifically enacted to deal with SWAPO freedom fighters, defined freedom fighters as 'terrorists' and calls for the death penalty for so-called 'acts of terrorism'.

"Shortly after the passage of this Act, it was announced in Pretoria that 37 freedom fighters would be tried for alleged 'acts of terrorism' which, it was said, they had committed in 'South West Africa'. As you are all aware, these Comrades were sentenced from five years to life imprisonment. Many of them are now being held at Robben Island.

"The armed struggle intensified in spite of these heavy sentences. Many of our Comrades have died in South African prisons and some are still rotting in Vorster's dungeons.

"Our progress can also be measured in terms of the numerous ambushes, pitched battles and raids carried out by SWAPO freedom fighters in three Regions—Ovamboland, Okavango and the Caprivi Strip—since the beginning of the armed struggle. Fighting between the SWAPO freedom fighters and South African security forces was so intense in the Caprivi Strip—between October and December 1968—that as a result more than 3,500 Namibians fled to Zambia as refugees.

"What we face in Namibia today is an enemy which is not only well armed and supported by the capitalist-imperialists, but an enemy which is also desperate. Since the beginning of the armed struggle fascist soldiers now stationed in Namibia stand at 15,000 men strong. These are soldiers who are not only fighting against our freedom fighters, but who are also at the same time terrorising innocent civilians.

"Now in the whole of Southern Africa, the oppressed masses have taken up arms."

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APPEAL FOR SUPPORT

Among the reprisals carried out against Namibian civilians by South African police and troops has been the poisoning of wells which, in this parched land, are vital for men and for their sole means of livelihood, cattle.

The Congress bitterly condemned the support extended to South Africa, Rhodesia and Portugal by France, West Germany, the United States and Britain. It specifically condemned Britain for providing jet bombers, tanks and most of South Africa's naval vessels, for allowing Barclays and the Standard bank to assist in fund raising for levying armed gangs to operate against Namibians, and for its diplomatic manoeuvres which confirmed South Africa's illegal occupation of the country.

In marked contrast it thanked the Organisation of African Unity and a number of African and Socialist states by name for their material and moral support as well as progressive organisations in a number of Western countries including Britain.

The Resolutions included an appeal for international support to win the United Nations for the ending of the South African trusteeship, and for moral and material support for SWAPO in its leadership of the Namibian people's struggle for independence.

WELSH MARXIST QUARTERLY

We should like to add our congratulations to the many already received by those responsible for the publication of *Cyffro* (Change)[3]—the Welsh Marxist Quarterly, number 2 of which appeared recently.

This lively journal is printed in both English and Welsh and contains articles on politics, economics, literary and cultural questions, as well as poems printed in both languages.

Among the contributors are people prominent in Welsh political, literary, academic, and religious life as well as leading people in the labour and trade union movement in Wales.

For example, in this second issue there are contributions from novelists like Alexander Cordell (well-known for his novels—*The Rape of the Fair Country,* and *The Hosts of Rebecca,* both of which deal with the early development of industrial capitalism in Wales); Welsh poets like the doyen of them all—the Communist, T. E. Nicholas; economist Tom Drinkwater; Emlyn Williams, Welsh miners' leader; political figures like Gwynfor Evans, Welsh Nationalist MP, Idris Cox, veteran Welsh Communist leader, and many others.

Amongst many fine pieces, number 2 of *Cyffro* is notable for Alexander Cordell's article—"The Dustbowl of the Executive", a witty, devastatingly robust, class exposure of the parasitism, corruption, and exploitation including that of intellectuals and executive types, characteristic of life under capitalism. In addition there is a penetrating analysis of the plight of the Welsh economy by Tom Drinkwater who outlines pointers for its immediate and long-term improvement. There is also an interesting dialogue between the Rev. D. Ben Rees and Idris Cox on Ghandi, and a number of poems.

All the above mentioned contributions are in English. We are not, alas, competent to comment on the many contributions, including poems, which are in Welsh.

Readers of *Marxism Today,* whether or not they are bi-lingual, will find much of the greatest interest and enjoyment in this new addition to the growing family of Marxist journals.

JUSTICE FIRST

Justice First, edited by Lewis Donnelly, published by Sheed and Ward,[4] is a call for justice in employment, education, social services, before the law, in social participation, for Britain's black minority. Without justice first, runs the argument, there will be no racial peace.

The book consists of six essays by sociologists, race relations workers, and a black power advocate, some of whom are Roman Catholics, others Protestants, others of no declared religious views.

The general theme is discussed by the editor who is race relations adviser to the Catholic Institute for International Relations. The most pungent contribution comes from Michael and Ann Dummett, in their joint essay in which they examine and castigate Governments, politicians, official and semi-official organisations set up to work in race

[3] *Cyffro:* A quarterly Marxist discussion journal for Wales: 2s. 6d. per issue, from 4, Tudor Street, Cardiff, Wales.

[4] *Justice First,* Lewis Donnelly editor, published Sheed and Ward, pp. 169, price 30s.

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relations. They show how both Labour and Tory Governments have yielded to racist pressures passing discriminatory legislation and introducing only token moves in the direction of fostering positive race relations and opening up opportunities for black immigrants and their families. Much of what they advocate is basic to the policy fought for by the Communist Party and this gives rise to the thought that here, in the course of the dialogues between Christians and Catholics, is a fruitful field for discussion, agreement and action.

Articles by Robert Moore and Brian Cohen describe the situations of immigrants seeking houses and jobs. These are two areas in which discrimination bears heavily on the black immigrant and where racial tensions are potentially highly explosive. The Cohen article should, especially, be read by active Trade Unionists from Executive Committee to branch level, for the organised Labour Movement must face up to the battle for equal opportunity and win the white workers now to take up the struggle.

Roy Sawh's article is wide ranging and hard hitting. He sometimes aims at the wrong targets and betrays a familiar weakness of black power theory, namely a classless view of the problem and a tendency towards broad generalisations, when what we need is specific examination of actual situations in all their diversity and complexity with policies designed to meet them.

Sawh has been arrested and prosecuted for incitement to race hatred under the provisions of the 1965 Race Relations Act and pertinently asks when Enoch Powell and Duncan Sandys and others like them are to be treated likewise.

Many readers will find John Downing's essay on the roots of racialist ideas very stimulating and informative. He examines Britain's history of slave trading and colonial oppression and finds the origins of racialist attitudes here, as do Marxists. The end of empire with the white man feeling sore at his displacement is as Downing suggests a part of the picture, but it is only one part. We need to see why today, at the present stage of monopoly capitalism, racialist ideas are part of the ideological equipment of the ruling class, increasingly utilised by it. The answer lies in the severe general crisis of capitalism when the basis for broader unity against exploitation and oppression exists, when the system itself and the ruling class are seriously threatened. Racialism which boosts their super profits, as in South Africa, and racialism which divides potential allies, white and black workers, are important to them in their frantic efforts at self-preservation.

All these contributions to *Justice First* show what an immense task faces us if we are to defeat racialism. If the book has a weakness it is the absence of discussion about where we go from here. This is the challenge that faces us all, Christians, Communists, intellectuals, workers, immigrants, black and white, and is what we should now be discussing.

THE GERMAN IDEOLOGY

Later this month Lawrence and Wishart are publishing a new "quality paperback" edition of Marx' and Engels' *The German Ideology*.[5] This will provide English readers with a really readable text of the vital first part of this work.

The complete book comprises nearly 700 pages, and has for some time been available in a hardback edition printed in Moscow. Most of it consists of a very long and very detailed polemic against the "young Hegelians" who flourished in the 1840s, and makes very tedious reading today, retaining little more than a historical interest for scholars. But it was introduced by a brilliant exposition of the fundamental ideas of historical materialism and scientific communism which Marx and Engels were then working out. This is, indeed, their first exposition of the new revolutionary philosophy, and as such is written with all the freshness of a new discovery.

The new paperback contains the whole of the first part, plus a number of excerpts presenting the most telling points, which remain fully relevant today, out of the polemics that occupied the rest of the book. As appendices are added the *Theses on Feuerbach* and, for good measure, an English translation of an unfinished work by Marx hitherto unpublished in English—*Introduction to a Critique of Political Economy*.

The whole has been edited by C. J. Arthur, of the School of Social Studies at Sussex University. In a very readable and lucid introduction, the editor explains the place of *The German Ideology* in the evolution of Marxism, and summarises the controversies

[5] *The German Ideology, Part One*. Edited and with introduction by C. J. Arthur. Lawrence and Wishart, 20s.

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with the "young Hegelians" which occupied the parts of the work not included in this edition.

This is a new paperback which will be invaluable, especially for students.

IVOR—THE YOUNGEST SON

Ivor Montagu probably requires no introduction to most readers of *Marxism Today.* Now sixty-six years old, he is one of the most versatile of all English Communists—born into the wealthy banking family of the Samuel-Montagus and in a varied career a working zoologist, a journalist, a film director, a film critic, President of the International Table Tennis Federation and, all the while, an active Communist. He was at one time assistant editor of *The Daily Worker.* And he was awarded the Lenin Peace Prize for his work in the peace movement.

Such a man, one would judge, should surely write his autobiography. Sure enough, he is writing it. And the first volume has been published by Lawrence and Wishart.[6]

It is fascinating stuff, starting with his boyhood in the plush surroundings of the family manions in London and Hampshire and ending soon after the general strike, with an amazing fund of experience crammed into those years. As a boy and youth he was keen on sports, and mixed with many of the stars of tennis and cricket; then, later on, he became an intimate of the intellectual stars, especially Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells; he studied zoology, and organised an expedition to the Caucasus—it was not long after the Russian Revolution—to collect rare mice for the British Museum; and then went into the film studios, and helped found the Film Society.

At a very early stage he turned to socialism—first attracted as a schoolboy by two pamphlets by Bernard Shaw entitled *Socialism for Millionaires* and *Socialism and Superior Brains.* "I blush to admit it," he writes, "but I thought them appropriate to me". Not long after, he was in trouble with the family. "My mother asked me to leave the British Socialist Party. My father ordered me to desist from politics . . . My father insisted it was not fair to use his money for purposes of which he disapproved. I insisted equally that it could not be his intention that his son should be untrue to principles in which he believed".

Here is a very readable book indeed. Two more volumes are promised.

[6] *The Youngest Son*, by Ivor Montagu. Lawrence and Wishart, 63s.

CHICHESTER POETS

Some two years ago a group of young, and at that time totally unknown poets, booked a room in a pub in Chichester and held a reading. From this they formed a group called "Chichester Poets Co-operative" and went on to publish a little magazine "About This".

The title, from a poem by Mayakovsky, gives a clue to the intent and orientation of the two poets, Kevin Kewell and John Bennett, who founded and continue to edit "About This" and organise public readings for the "Co-operative".

It was intended in the beginning that the magazine and the group readings would be, what could broadly be described, as poetry of a left and revolutionary content. However, no firm ideological commitment was demanded, no specific theories or forms were prescribed, poetry being the main consideration.

All poets who came to read, or submitted material for publication, were welcome. Criticism was usually of "quality" with a preference for a strong voice and a clear image. The present Co-operative consists of Kevin Kewell, John Bennett and Bill Littlewood, all with roots in the Labour Movement. Others join the group from time to time. But beginnings and ends of the "academic year", jobs away from the area, partly contribute towards making these poets the present base of the organisation.

A point with which we come to the point. The Editors would like to bring the next edition *(About This 4)* out in print, and would like to contact poets nationally who would be interested in contributing and to selling the kind of magazine outlined above. They would welcome financial assistance, poetry and prose contributions, advertisements, help with sales and distribution; plus interest in and requests for public readings. If you are interested further details can be obtained from Kevin Kewell, 15 Marine Drive, Selsey, Sussex.

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Class Structure in Britain Today

Alan Hunt

The analysis of class structure is a key starting point for a Marxist analysis of any society. Yet all too often in our analysis we rely upon the over-simplified view that society is to be divided solely between the working class on one side, and the capitalist class on the other. For any deeper analysis we tend to utilise the categories of the bourgeois vote-predicters, such as "middle class", "lower middle class", etc. which have little or no connection with a *class* analysis.

The need for a continuing examination of trends within the class structure of Britain is not only important as the basis for the tactics and strategy of the revolutionary movement, but is important in a wider ideological context. Many recent trends of discussion on the Left, for example, Garaudy and Marcuse, base their views on assessments of changing class structure.

This article sets out, not to provide definitive solutions, but to sketch areas that need discussion. To this end it seeks to do three things. (i) To examine changes in the overall relationship between the major classes, both quantitative and qualitative changes. (ii) To examine the composition of each class, and to discuss any changes *within* that class. (iii) To attempt to pinpoint some of the political and ideological issues that any changes revealed point to.

Marxist Concept of Class

"Class" is a central concept in Marxist theory. The method of historical materialism points to the determinant role that classes play in the development and transformation of human society. The starting point for the analysis of each society is the way in which its system of production is organised. In the process of production certain types of relationships are imposed upon men. As Marx expressed it:

> "Men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of social development". (Marx—*Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy.*)

A class is an aggregate of people sharing a common relationship in the system of production. These different relations to the means of production reflect themselves in a variety of ways: in the type of work done, in the way in which income is acquired, and with respect to the acquisition and use of property. But no single factor can be made the basis of a class analysis as the bourgeois sociologists have tried to do (especially popular has been income level as a determinant of class). Most important of all, the Marxist concept of class is *objective*, it does not ask what class people *think* they belong to, but, to what class *do* they belong.

Another important feature of the Marxist concept of class is that it is a relational concept, it expresses the essential contradiction or opposition that exists between those who stand in different relations to the means of production.

Trends in Capitalist Economy

In examining changes in the class structure of any society one looks first at the economic basis. It is therefore necessary to examine briefly some of the main trends in capitalist economies. Firstly, modern capitalism exhibits an increasing application of technological innovation. Science, as man's knowledge of his natural environment, plays an increasing part in the process of production. This results in the creation of a wider range of tasks in the economy. There is an extension of the division of labour, reflecting itself in an increasing degree of specialisation in jobs. Yet at the same time there is a contradictory tendency. The advance of technology reduces the demand for purely manual labour, and increases the need for labour with a larger mental component. Industry requires a higher general level of skill, but also insists that it be as flexible as possible.

The most consistent and important feature of modern capitalism is its continued tendency towards the concentration of production. Monopolisation is not only the general trend, it is now a matter of state policy. Its effect is increasingly that of the concentration of ownership as opposed to concentration of production. This process has played a crucial part in the changes in the size and characteristics of the bourgeois class.

Within the framework of technological and monopolistic tendencies we have seen a dramatic decline in many traditional industries, and the rise of new industries. It is generally the case that the distribution of occupations is qualitatively different in these new industries. Most notable is the decrease in the number of manual workers and the increase in the number of managerial and technical employees.

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Table I[1]

The Occupied Population of Great Britain by Major Occupational Groups, 1911-1961

Occupational Groups	*Major Occupational Groups as a Percentage of Total Occupied Population 1911-1961*					*Growth Indices of Major Occupational Groups, 1911-1961 (1911=100)*				
	1911	*1921*	*1931*	*1951*	*1961*	*1911*	*1921*	*1931*	*1951*	*1961*
1. Employers and Proprietors	6·7	6·8	6·7	5·0	4·7	100	107	114	91	92
2. All White-Collar Workers	18·7	21·2	23·0	30·0	35·9	100	119	141	202	247
(a) Managers and Administrators	3·4	3·6	3·7	5·5	5·4	100	112	122	197	201
(b) Higher Professionals	1·0	1·0	1·1	1·9	3·0	100	107	130	236	390
(c) Lower Professionals and Technicians	3·1	3·5	3·5	4·7	6·0	100	121	130	189	253
(d) Foremen and Inspectors	1·3	1·4	1·5	2·6	2·9	100	118	136	249	288
(e) Clerks	4·5	6·5	6·7	10·4	12·7	100	151	169	281	360
(f) Salesmen and Shop Assistants	5·4	5·1	6·5	5·7	5·9	100	99	139	129	141
3. All Manual Workers	74·6	72·0	70·3	64·2	59·3	100	102	108	106	102
4. Total Occupied Population	100	100	100	100	100	100	105	115	123	129

[1] Research Papers (No. 6), Donovan Report (1967).

The new industries tend to be more capital intensive and as a consequence produce a change in the occupational structure, the significance being that there will be a continuing, if not accelerating trend in this direction. The new industries, such as chemicals, electrical engineering, and petroleum, are setting a pattern for the future division of labour. The effects of these changes are to some degree masked by the preponderance of manual labour in the traditional industries.

Division of Labour

The figures in Table I, which relate to occupied persons, show that between 1911 and 1961 there has been a significant decline in those classed as employers and proprietors, from 6.7 per cent to 4.7 per cent. However, part of this decline is to be explained by the spread of incorporation of businesses which renders the original employer being now classed as a director or manager. When these figures are further broken down they reveal an even more significant decline in the real number of employers for there has been over the period an increase in the number of self-employed proprietors.

The Table also shows that there has been a general increase in what may be classed as non-manual or white-collar occupations. The increase has been from 18.6 per cent to 35.9 per cent over the same period. It is most important at the outset to realise that included under this head is an extraordinary diversity of activities, bearing very different class positions, ranging from the managers of large enterprises to the lowest paid clerk.

The growth in the number of managers is a function of the increasing incorporation and monopolisation of industry. As Marx said of the growth of corporations:

> "only the functionary remains and the capitalist disappears from the process of production as a superfluous person". (Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 3.)

Manual and Non-Manual Workers

At the other end of the scale the increased division of labour produces a vast range of jobs which are non-manual in character. But the term non-manual is not in itself very helpful; the typist is traditionally defined as non-manual, but surely is the most manual of all activities. In general an increasing number of office jobs depend upon new forms of mechanisation, of which the computer is probably the most important example. What is significant is that the increase in the productivity of labour implies that to support one "productive worker", that is the worker at the point of production who is actually concerned with the transformation of materials into products for the market, a considerable range of auxiliary occupations both in the office and on the shop-floor have been created. But one must have reservations whether the concept "productive worker" is very useful; it is probably more important that all employees share in the realisation of value.

It must be stressed that the largest increase in non-manual jobs has been in the newer industries and amongst those employed directly by the State.[2] For example, the number of non-manual employees in the chemical industry is at present running at the

[2] The growth of the state as a major employer is a development of such importance that it deserves more attention than has been possible in this article.

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high level of 38 per cent of the total number of employees. It is a fairly safe generalisation to suppose that in the future an increasing percentage of those who work for wages and salaries will be in non-manual occupations. But it must also be emphasised that the habit of bourgeois sociologists of equating non-manual with the "middle class" is becoming increasingly artifical. The non-manual sector now covers such as extensive differentiation in terms of levels of skill, income, etc., as not to constitute anything approaching a homogeneous social group.

Table I shows that the number of manual workers, as a percentage of the total occupied population has decreased from 74.6 per cent in 1911 to 59.3 per cent in 1961. But given the rise in population the number has increased slightly from 13½ million to 14 million.

Traditionally it has been conventional to identify "manual workers" as "the working class". Do these figures imply that there has been a decline in the size of the working class, and that the Tory slogan of "We're all middle class now" will soon be true? The truth is the direct opposite; the confusion arises from the naive identification of the working class solely with manual labour. What is certainly true is that the number of people who are not the owners of capital and are not employers has increased, but that an increasing proportion of non-owners are in non-manual jobs. Further, with the general increase in the mental element in labour, the very distinction between manual and non-manual becomes less meaningful. At the same time it must be emphasised that the majority of those earning wages and salaries are still employed in manual occupations.

The figures examined so far show then: a decline in the number of employers, a considerable growth in non-manual occupations, and a decline in the number of manual workers. It is now necessary to turn to the second objective of this article and examine each of the major occupational groups and examine changes *within* that social class.

The Ruling Class

The ruling class consists not only of employers, but also the overlapping, but not identical group, of owners of capital. In addition there is the "political" ruling class, that is those who in the Government, civil service and the whole paraphernalia of the State, initiate policy in the interests of the primary group of owners and employers. That the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few is a characteristic of capitalism needs little emphasis. What has however changed is that the form of this wealth is now in the form of *corporate*, rather than private wealth. The determinant economic power in our society is exercised through a complex mechanism of relationships between industrial and commercial enterprises, financial institutions and state bodies.

The problem posed by these developments whereby wealth and its concomitant power are exercised indirectly through a complex structure of institutions is that the ruling class is much less readily identifiable. Further, many of the superficial characteristics of wealth, notably its conspicuous consumption, are enjoyed by the film stars and pop idols; while the ruling class is the faceless men of the boardroom, whose decisions affect the well-being of millions and determine the policies of governments. This difficulty is further increased by the varied forms of capital ownership, whereby individuals hide behind the veil of corporate personality.

Composition of the Working Class

We turn our attention now to changes that have taken place in the composition of the working class. As has been indicated earlier the main trend has been in the growth of semi-skilled occupations. This growth has been at the expense both of the traditional skilled jobs and of the unskilled ones. It is of considerable importance that in industry after industry the percentage of workers falling into skilled categories has fallen dramatically, so that today they only constitute a small fraction of the total number of employees. These changes are reflected in developments within the trade unions, in the growth of the mass unions of semi-skilled workers, and the decline in the economic and political importance of the traditional skilled unions.

The new industrial patterns place a premium on more general skills, rather than those which require long periods of apprenticeship and training. The tendency has been for "skilled" jobs to become white collar in character, that is to lose their manual content.

At the same time the number of workers who are directly productive has continued to decline. More and more workers carry out activities that are intermediary between the production of goods and their realisation on the market. It is suggested that the effect of this process is to blur the recognition of exploitation. The directly productive worker readily sees the difference in the price of his labour, and the price that the goods he produces sell for. But the extension in the division of labour makes both the nature and the intensity of exploitation less apparent. This is also related to the continuing changes that are taking place in the method of determining wages, in particular the declining use of hourly rates.

The general decline in the demand for unskilled manual labour is associated with the phenomenon of the sharp emergence of large areas of both economic and social poverty. The New Poverty that has been highlighted in recent years is, in part,

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Table II[3]

The Percentage Distribution of Occupied by Economic Sectors (1881-1951)

Sector	*1881*	*1891*	*1901*	*1911*	*1921*	*1931*	*1951*
Primary	13	11	9	9	7	6	5
Secondary	50	49	47	51	49	47	49
Tertiary	37	40	44	40	44	47	46

Primary: agriculture. *Secondary:* mining, manufacturing, building, fuel. *Tertiary:* transport, communications, distribution, public administration, professional and administrative services.

[3] Source International Labour Review, 73 (1956).

a reflection of the general decline of the labourer as opposed to the semi-skilled worker.

It was shown earlier that there has been a relative decline in the number of manual workers, but a very important fact is indicated in Table II, which demonstrates that the main cause has been the fall in the number of agricultural workers, whereas the number of industrial workers has remained remarkably constant. We can conclude therefore that there has been no general decline in the size of the working class, but rather that there have been changes in its composition.

The Middle Strata

It is now necessary to look at that section of the population who are neither employers nor manual workers, but who constitute 36 per cent of the occupied population. This is conventionally termed the "middle class". Yet it certainly does not constitute a class in the Marxist use of that term, because its members do not share any common relationship to the means of production, nor do they share any objective unity of interests that separates them from the working class. Indeed it must be stressed that it is composed of a very wide range of occupational and social categories, so as to deny it a meaningful homogeneity.

On the other hand, there can be no doubt that the concept "middle class" does have important ideological connotations in British society. As a subjective factor of identification it exerts an influence. We cannot therefore wish away the problem by denying its existence.

In order to provide a more helpful analysis it is necessary to reject the term middle class, and to insist on an analysis that examines the functions of those who are neither employers nor manual workers. In particular it is necessary to concentrate on the functional relationship of the middle strata with the two main social classes in British society. That is, to distinguish between those whose primary economic activity is to carry out the functions of the capitalist, and are closely integrated with the successes and failures of capitalism, and those whose primary position is the selling of their labour power.

The basic proposition is that the vast majority of those in non-manual occupations, in that they sell their labour, and are exploited in the realisation of surplus value, are members of the working class. But because of the wide differentiations within the middle strata it is important to examine the main categories into which non-manual occupations can be broken down.

Despite the theory of the "managerial revolution", emphasising the division between ownership and control, Table I shows that the number of managers has not yet doubled this century. Taking account of the growth of incorporation this growth has been surprisingly small. Further the figures for particular industries show that the number of top-managers, not themselves shareholders, is remarkably small; the main growth area having been at the lower end of the income scale. Managers are substantially integrated within the capitalist structure not simply by their own values, but because they carry out the functions of the capitalist class in immediate day to day control. Yet they do not constitute a new class, as apostles of the "managerial revolution" have argued. In passing it is worth noting that such theories still have a considerable degree of currency. The crucial point to be made is that the manager only wields power in so far as he fulfils the interests of the capitalist; his fate in the take-over, shows that his position is far too vulnerable to give any tenability to the view that he is part of a "new" ruling class.

The traditional professions, law, medicine and the church have remained relatively static; the significant growth has come from the newer scientific professions. A larger increase is to be found in the category of lower professionals and technicians. The increase is more pronounced when this group is further broken down. There has been a rapid expansion in the number of draughtsmen and laboratory technicians, and this increase is substantially concentrated in the newer industries. An even larger increase is to be detected in those

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Table III[4]

The Growth of Non-Manual Unions Affiliated to the TUC (1948-64)

Union	*1948*	*1955*	*1964*	*% increase 1948-1964*
Assoc. of Scientific Workers (A.Sc.W.)	14,606	11,786	20,061	+37.3%
Assoc. of Supervisory, Staffs, Executives & Technicians (ASSET)	15,800	16,501	35,588	+125.2%
Clerical & Administrative Workers' Union (CAWU)	38,493	53,148	79,177	+105.7%
Draughtsmen's & Allied Technicians' Assoc. (DATA)	45,049	58,803	65,893	+46.3%

[4] Research Papers (No. 6), Donovan Report (1967).

defined as clerical workers, who now constitute 12.7 per cent of the occupied population as compared with 4.5 per cent in 1911.

It is now clear that the major area of growth in the middle strata are at its lower income level. Here people are employed at incomes not dissimilar from those in manual occupations. What is more important is that the style and nature of their work is increasingly similar to that of the manual working class. The number of such people working in larger units is increasing, and so is the degree to which their work is dependant upon machinery. Even the significance of the distinction between salaries and weekly wages is declining, the salary meaning little more than monthly wage.

Middle Strata and Working Class

These changes are reflected in the growth of trade union membership in these occupations. Table III shows the increase in membership of the main non-manual unions. These increases have been recorded particularly in the non-manual sectors of manufacturing industries and in government employment. However, it should be noted that the density of unionisation, that is the percentage of total employees who are members of appropriate trade unions, is still lower than in manual occupations.[5] Important though this growth of non-manual unionism is, it has done little more than keep abreast of the increased size of the non-manual labour force, i.e. there has been no significant increase in the degree of unionisation of such jobs. Perhaps the most important facet is that there have been changes in the types of unions to which non-manual workers belong, and particularly to the forms of action that they have been taking, which has brought non-manual unions much closer to those of manual workers. This is reflected in increased affiliation to the TUC. The recent actions of the teachers' unions are the latest in a long line of previously "professional associations" that have taken militant industrial action.

Finally, the majority of the non-manual workers are not separated in their style of life from manual workers to the degree that existed at the turn of the century. In so far as ownership of consumer durables and house purchase was symbolic of "middle class" status, these activities have been opened up to larger sections of manual workers. Those non-manual workers who wish to emphasise their separation from manual workers, find it more difficult to do so merely by acquisition of material symbols.

The general pattern then is of an increasing proportion of the employed population being in non-manual jobs, while at the same time the things which, either objectively or subjectively, separated them from the working class have declined in importance. The position of the middle strata then is that we must underline their membership of the working class properly defined; the separation that exists is subjective and ideological in character, and its objective basis is less stable. In this context it is important that in the definition of "working class" emphasis must be placed upon the primary criterion, that of the sale of labour power for wages and salaries, rather than upon the particular type of work done. The association of the term working class with traditional manual work holds back an understanding of the nature of our class structure and gives credence to those ideologies which wish to divide the manual and the non-manual worker.

[5] In manufacturing industries, non-manual unionisation is 30 per cent compared to 50 per cent for manual workers.

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Problems of Class Structure

It is now intended to turn attention to the ideological issues raised by the above discussion. In the earlier discussion of the "ruling class" it was suggested that a major problem is the growing difficulty of identifying the composition of the ruling class. Such expressions as "the monopolists" are much less tangible, and therefore less meaningful, than for example "the employers". The activities of the ruling class are more and more hidden from public view, and as a consequence consciousness of the reality of conflicting class interests may be dulled. In Sam Aaronovitch's book *The Ruling Class* a very useful attempt was made to identify the key figures, and relationships, that constitutes the ruling class. Much more of this type of work is necessary in a period when, despite its disguised public face, the ruling class has become more powerful than ever. But it is not just a problem of identification, it is necessary to give more attention to the way in which the ruling class exercises its power. How does it control the State? In what way are the economic interests of the ruling class translated into political policies? It is questions like these which must be fully answered, especially in a period of Labour Governments, if the class nature of our society is to be widely demonstrated.

Much of the above discussion has focused on the middle strata. Firstly, we are confronted with a problem of definition. It has been demonstrated that in crucial respects the majority of this section are objectively members of the working class. Yet nevertheless important differences remain, particularly with respect to the immediacy of exploitation. Do concepts such as "intellectual worker" help our understanding? This term has played an important part in the discussions in the French Communist Party, but it is suggested that in the British context that it may lead to confusion, largely because of the more restrictive English usage of the word "intellectual". What needs to be avoided is a definition which identifies the whole of the middle strata, particularly managers and higher professionals, with the working class. The solution lies in emphasising not so much the *type* of work done, but rather in concentrating on the *function* within the productive process.

Emphasis has been placed on the importance of growth in non-manual trade unions. The development of forms of struggle akin to those of the traditional unions, and increasing affiliation to the TUC, point towards the objective incorporation of these social groups within the working class movement. Yet it is to be expected that the development will be uneven because, by virtue of social background and training, they are more likely to be subject to the impact of bourgeois ideology. It is this tendency to instability which makes it essential to approach cautiously any theory which attributes some special role to these "intellectual workers", so also those theories which give students a more important part in revolutionary development than the working class.

Contradictions

The changes that have taken place within the working class reflect the contradiction between increasing specialisation resulting from an extension of the division of labour and at the same time an increasing uniformity in type and style of work. This trend is reflected in the developments within the trade union movement. They are paralleled by economic developments that have brought about a relative increase in the standard of living of the majority of the working class. During the 1950s there was a very enthusiastic view among bourgeois sociologists that increasing "affluence" would result in the working class becoming assimilated into the "middle class". However, even respectable sociologists are now much less certain that affluence will bring the working class to its knees.[6]

Significantly this discussion finds its reflection in the political debate of the Left. The writings of Marcuse, Debray, Fanon and Che Guevera, all in varying degrees, suggest that the focus of the international class struggle has moved away from the industrial workers as its vanguard and place emphasis upon various other social groups, the Negroes, the students, or the peasantry. The changes in the British working class suggest that affluence does not result in the abandonment of class struggle. Yet we should not close our eyes to the implications of these changes. A period of relative economic advance and stability appears to have reinforced economist trends (narrow concentration on issues of wages and conditions) within the labour movement. Yet at the same time the growth of monopoly and State economic intervention results in a growing consciousness of the political character of the economic movement. This has been clearly demonstrated during the course of the struggle against the Incomes Policy. What is clear is that the tendencies are contradictory and uneven, and that it is facile to adopt the view either that nothing has changed or that the working class has been absorbed into the capitalist system.

The "New Poverty"

Considerable importance must be attached to the emergence of the New Poverty. The emergence in

[6] See Goldthorpe, Lockwood, Bechhofer & Platt, *The Affluent Worker*, which demonstrates few changes in industrial, social and political attitudes of a sample of Luton car workers.

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the so-called Affluent Society of large pockets of permanent poverty is proof of the irreconcilable contradictions within even "planned capitalism". The ideological implication is the inability of capitalism, despite the Welfare State and Labour Governments, to fulfil even the most rudimentary needs of a large section of the population. It is a weakness that at present insufficient attention to explaining the causes and the solution of this development has been shown by the Communist Party and the trade unions. For all the good work of Child Poverty Action and Shelter, they can be no substitute for the conscious involvement of the socialist and labour movement.

Significant changes have taken place in the social structure of Britain. Our awareness of these changes, and their implications, requires us to apply Marxism as a means of analysis and not as a dogma. The fundamental and underlying reality of our society remains that of a class system, but the form and the texture of that class society constantly changes, and so alters the balance between the class forces.

Lenin Centenary

Lenin and Philosophy

Maurice Cornforth

This article reproduces a lecture given at the Marx Memorial Library on April 15th.

A century after the birth of Lenin we should try to understand in perspective his immense contribution to Marxist philosophy.

Fighting for the carrying through of a socialist revolution, Lenin based himself on and developed the thought of Marx and Engels in the way he found necessary at that time for the fight that was then being waged.

No more than any other mortal man did Lenin establish once and for all a set of immutable philosophical truths, a doctrine that his successors have only to learn, hold fast to, and keep on repeating.

To preserve Lenin's body they mummified it, and put it in a mausoleum. But his contribution to Marxism, to communism, to the revolutionary movement of our time and the future emancipation of mankind, cannot be treated like that. It was alive and should be kept alive. To preserve it alive we must understand how he wrote what he wrote to meet the situation he faced when he wrote it. We must then evaluate it in relation to what has happened since and the problems we face today. And we must try to see how this work now needs to be carried forward.

Revolutionary Theory

For Lenin, without revolutionary theory there could be no revolutionary movement.

At a time when the working-class movement was growing in organisation but becoming bogged down in the opportunism that was concerned only with particular economic and sectional demands, with organising to win various demands but not with breaking the power of the ruling class and establishing the workers in power, Lenin fought to build a revolutionary party that would hold fast by revolutionary theory.

For this he was blamed as a sectarian, a fanatic and a splitter. But events proved him right.

Revolutionary theory makes clear the goal of the revolutionary movement and the way to fight for it. Without such theory, the goal disappears and cannot be won. And the fight disappears too.

Throughout his life Lenin worked on the mastery and development of revolutionary theory. And in this respect he steadily opposed the "revisionist" idea put forward by Edward Bernstein for what was then the most powerful workers' party, the German Social-Democratic Party—the idea that summed up the whole philosophy of opportunism

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and reformism—that "the movement is everything and the goal nothing".

While that idea prevails the working-class movement can do nothing but adapt itself to the conditions of capitalism. In his fight against it and in his development of revolutionary theory, Lenin came forward not simply as a leader of the Russian workers but as the man who showed the way forward, and still does, for the working people of the whole world.

Revolutionary Philosophy

In his insistence on revolutionary theory Lenin insisted on the development of a revolutionary philosophy as an integral part of it.

For this he was especially blamed by many who thought that, while a certain amount of economic and political theory might be of use and importance for the movement, there was no need to argue about philosophy. By doing so they thought Lenin was only causing quarrels and splits. What use could workers have for such an academic thing as philosophy?

For Lenin, philosophy was a world outlook, a system of general ideas determining how people approach the particular problems they face in life. If the movement does not work out its own philosophy it falls victim to the influence of the philosophies of its enemies. And that was just what was happening to the working-class movement when it regarded Marxist philosophy as a matter of little or no importance.

Revolutionary theory must be held together, inspired and guided by revolutionary philosophy. That is why Marxist philosophy is an integral part of Marxism, Communist philosophy an integral part of Communism.

If the movement fails to challenge the philosophies of its enemies with its own revolutionary philosophy, its own economics and politics soon get watered down in deference to its enemies' views. And then its practical activities become reformist—and from that, as we know by experience, even conservative—and not revolutionary.

Partisanship in Philosophy

Lenin always stressed the need to develop philosophical theory as an integral part of the revolutionary theory of the working-class movement. The central guiding idea of all his work in philosophy was the idea of revolutionary partisanship.

For him, philosophy had to be developed as a partisan activity, a theory made up to meet the needs of the revolutionary movement in its fight against reaction, a weapon for revolutionaries to use in their fight to destroy the influence of reactionary ideas and to work out and clarify their own revolutionary programme.

Revolutionary partisanship in philosophy, as taught and practised by Lenin, is a complex thing, and its content or meaning cannot be summed up in any simple slogan.

First of all, I think we should try to understand it in the light of the testimony of Lenin's widow, Krupskaya, in her published Memoirs. Lenin's whole activity, she wrote, was inspired by his love of the common people. He wished with them to see an end to all poverty, oppression and exploitation, to see them inherit the earth. Every suffering, every wrong, every act of oppression, every imposition, aroused his burning indignation.

Lenin's partisanship in philosophy meant implacable opposition to whatever threw dust into people's eyes, blinded them from seeing their true condition or pacified them with illusions. It meant opposition to everything that made the educated, the intellectuals, into servants of the ruling class or into a self-perpetuating elite, instead of leaders and teachers of the people. And it meant uncompromising, uninhibited effort to seek truth and clarity in ideas, so as to understand things as they are and not as ideologists of the ruling class would have us believe they are.

Secondly, and following from this, partisanship in philosophy meant adopting, uncompromisingly and consistently, a materialist approach in opposition to all the fantasies, illusions and sophistries of philosophical idealism.

Thirdly, it meant trying to master dialectics, that is to say, trying to understand how things change and can be changed, and how concepts must be developed so as to comprehend ever more adequately the concrete processes of the world and of human life, and our own possibilities of action.

Fourthly, partisanship in philosophy meant not simply the critical discussion of opposing views but their unmasking. What might appear to be mere muddle, inaccuracy or logical fallacy was always in effect something more, a bit of sophistry for the ruling class, a bit of enemy ideology the acceptance of which would confuse and weaken the revolutionary struggle.

Lenin always adopted and demanded a most uncompromising attitude in philosophical argument, the refusal of all ideological concessions, the rejection of all excuses. Of course this did not mean refusal to recognise that there is "some truth" or even "much truth" in various opposing views. What it meant was insistence on always rooting out whatever distorted the truth.

Finally, Lenin's insistence on partisanship in philosophy meant that, for him, philosophy must be made into party philosophy, the philosophy of the revolutionary working-class party. Such a party must adopt, propagate and develop its

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revolutionary philosophy. And that philosophy must be developed, kept alive and propagated, not by academic philosophical institutions, but by the workers' party.

Lenin's Polemical Style

The conception of partisanship in philosophy dictated Lenin's polemical approach and polemical style in his philosophical writings. For him, to do philosophy was to enter into a battle on behalf of the revolutionary working-class movement. It was not a matter of mere theoretical discussion but of joining battle with an enemy.

Lenin's whole approach was, therefore, totally different from and opposed to that of the professional philosophers of the universities. It was the very reverse of academic.

And regarding philosophy as a battlefield, Lenin did not simply discuss ideas, as most academics do, but he attacked the people who propagated these ideas. In a real battle, of course, each position has to be captured, and that means knocking down or putting to flight the people from whom one must take it. So in philosophy, Lenin did not simply fight against ideas but joined battle with the individuals in whose writings ideas were propagated. For him the opponents were always identified as persons. He got them clearly in his sights with a view to shooting them down.

What may be termed the "Leninist style" in philosophy was, then, sharply polemical, and polemical not just against certain "views" but against individual expositions of views. "Just listen to what this man has written!" Lenin continually tells us. "He is wrong, he has got into a muddle, he is distorting the truth and misleading us!"

Lenin's Philosophical Writings

Lenin's main philosophical work was the book *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* which was published in 1908. After his death were published his *Philosophical Notebooks*, the most important parts of which consist of his personal study notes on Hegel's *Logic*, done subsequently to *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* during the period of the First World War. These notebooks, of course, contained his private memoranda and were not prepared or intended for publication. Lenin often dealt, moreover, with philosophical questions in the course of numerous political pamphlets or speeches, where such questions became especially relevant. Some of his most significant statements about dialectics, for example, were made in the course of his controversy with Bukharin and Trotsky about the organisation and policies of the Soviet trade unions. Finally, he included a brief and straightforward exposition of Marxist philosophy in an article on *Karl Marx*, written in 1914 for a Russian encyclopaedia.

"Materialism and Empirio-Criticism"

Materialism and Empirio-Criticism is a work written in the form of a systematic polemic. And the primary objects of this polemic were a group of Russian Marxists, or would-be Marxists, who were seeking to bring Marxism up-to-date, as they thought, by importing into it ideas borrowed from the contemporary bourgeois so-called philosophy of science.

It was written in the period following the defeat of the 1905 Revolution in Russia, when organisation had been smashed up by the violence of reaction, and many members were in panic and disarray. The production of this great work of revolutionary philosophy at that time was dictated by the conviction that without revolutionary theory the revolutionary movement could not survive. Its whole future was at stake. At a time when many revolutionaries were wavering and losing their grip, the book was a great manifesto for militant revolutionary materialism.

> "A number of writers, would-be Marxists, have this year undertaken a veritable campaign against the philosophy of Marxism", Lenin wrote in his Preface. "In the course of less than half a year four books devoted mainly and almost entirely to attacks on dialectical materialism have made their appearance . . . The task I have set myself in these comments is to seek for the stumbling block to people who under the guise of Marxism are offering something incredibly muddled, confused and reactionary."

So *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* is first of all a reply to attempts to revise Marxism by substituting bourgeois ideas for Marxist ones. To show how the offending would-be Marxists had stumbled, Lenin therefore takes the offensive against the bourgeois philosophers by whom they had been taken in. It is a devastating attack on the so-called "scientific" philosophy of the bourgeois philosophers of that time, and against those who wanted to substitute this philosophy for scientific Marxism. In making this attack, Lenin not only reaffirmed but further developed the basic ideas of Marxist philosophy.

The occasion for writing the book was not, then, simply that certain bourgeois philosophers were "offering something incredibly muddled, confused and reactionary"—which was nothing new. It was that the ideas of bourgeois philosophers were being taken up by would-be Marxists, who sought to import them into the working-class movement. This, as Lenin sought to show, could

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only confuse and disarm the movement. He saw the danger to the movement, and so leapt into the attack.

The Existence of the Material World

The controversies in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* mostly turn around one central point, and that is the existence of the external material world.

On the face of it, this seems a most extraordinary thing for a workers' party to spend time arguing about. What worker has ever doubted that material objects exist? It simply does not occur to him to question it, still less to suppose that the factory in which he works and the machines he uses are merely appearances in his own mind. When he attends his trade union branch he never questions the corporeal presence of his fellow members. It never occurs to him to suppose that the branch meeting consists in truth of disembodied spiritual beings having a mystical reunion.

But whatever rank and file workers may think—or rather, not think—about it, the fact is that from the beginning of bourgeois philosophy the existence of external material things has been called in question. How do we *know* that they exist, philosophers have asked. They have come to the conclusion that there is really no evidence for it. What we are aware of is the sensations in our own minds, and to suppose that beyond these there is a world of material things, existing independently of our sensations, is an inference without foundation.

From a strictly scientific point of view, the philosophers argued, the postulate of the existence of the material world is groundless, unnecessary and, indeed, an absurdity. What empirical science does is to analyse and trace out the order and connections of our sensations. It makes and can make no discoveries about a material world beyond our sensations.

Such, then, was the "scientific" philosophy which the would-be Marxists Lenin objected to sought to substitute for scientific Marxism, and to foist upon the working-class movement as the latest thing in scientific analysis.

Scientific Materialism versus "Fideism"

Why did he regard this as so serious a menace? Surely, from a workers' point of view, they were just being silly and might as well be ignored? Indeed, this is what many thought, and they said that Lenin was making an unnecessary fuss about it.

For Lenin, however, revolutionary philosophy was like the cement holding the whole of revolutionary theory together. And the philosophical vagaries of those who had been taken in by bourgeois theorising were attacks upon the whole standpoint of scientific materialism. They were attacking it by saying that materialism was out-of-date and we ought to regard the world as consisting of nothing but our own sensations.

But this was not a scientific point of view. The whole point of scientific investigation, scientific thinking, scientific analysis was to find out about the processes of the objective world, so as to understand them without any mystifications. To say that really there was nothing to be known but our own sensations was in effect to repudiate the aims of science and to leave room for every sort of confusion and mystification to come in again—by the back door, so to speak.

Again and again in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* Lenin cited the bourgeois philosophers whom the would-be Marxists admired to show that all their talk about a strictly scientific standpoint was nothing but a facade behind which were concealed the most unscientific and reactionary views.

If, as these philosophers taught, beyond our sensations there is no known material world, that leaves room for any sort of unknown "transcendental" reality beyond sensations which philosophers or theologians may choose to invent. If we know only our own sensations, we know nothing of the basis and cause of anything in our experience. For these philosophers, science could be in no way opposed to mysticism or religious faith. On the contrary, they preached a reconciliation, the sort of mystification to which Lenin gave the name as "fideism".

We know nothing of reality beyond our passing sensations, these philosophers argued. So what lies beyond is a matter for religious beliefs, for mystical intuitions, for faith. In seeking to substitute such views for dialectical materialism the would-be Marxists were indeed, as Lenin said, "offering something incredibly muddled, confused and reactionary". They naively took the scientific facade of enemy philosophy at its face value, and did not see the obscurantism masked by the pretendedly scientific arguments.

Militant Materialism and Atheism

A central feature of Lenin's polemic in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* is thus his contention that the would-be Marxists were acting to weaken and confuse the revolutionary movement by smuggling into it ideas that left the way open for the working class to continue to be duped by religion. Any lapse from a scientific materialist standpoint did this. Thus he was expressing the same sort of insistence on scientific materialism versus religious obscurantism as he expressed later in, for example, his letter to Maxim Gorky,

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in 1913, when the latter took to writing about God.

> "What are you doing?" Lenin demanded. ". . . Every religious idea, every idea of god, even every flirtation with the idea of god, is . . . contagion of the most abominable kind . . . It is awful, really . . . Why do you do it? It is devilishly vexatious."

He added, typically: "P.S. Do take greater care of your health, so that you can travel in the winter without catching cold." For Lenin generally accompanied his sharpest polemics against colleagues with anxious solicitude for their personal welfare.

Later, in an article on "The Significance of Militant Materialism" contributed in 1922 to the new German communist journal *Under the Banner of Marxism*, Lenin wrote:

> "A magazine that sets out to be an organ of militant materialism must be a fighting organ . . . in the sense of unflinchingly exposing and indicting all modern 'graduated flunkeys of clericalism', irrespective of whether they appear as representatives of official science or as free-lances calling themselves 'democratic Left or Socialist' . . . such a magazine must be an organ of militant atheism."

The Detailed Polemic

Lenin proceeded, in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, to argue in great detail against the contentions of the opponents of materialism. This very detailed polemic fills the main bulk of the book, and gives it its main punch.

His first concern was to expose the pretentions of the philosophers of sensation to have expounded a scientific theory of knowledge. He dealt in detail with the philosophical doctrine that bodies are nothing but "complexes of sensations", and showed that it simply did not make sense.

As for the argument that all discoveries of science are to be scientifically understood as discoveries about nothing but sensations, Lenin asked two questions:

> "Did nature exist prior to man?" and "Does man think with the help of the brain?"

If science can make discoveries only about our sensations, then there can be none, like those of geology, about the state of the world before any living animals with sensations appeared in it; and none, like those of physiology, about the dependence of sensation upon a physical organ, the brain.

In reply to the argument that material objects are nothing but "unknown things in themselves", Lenin argued that unknown things in themselves become known to us in human practice.

In so far as Lenin's opponents in these arguments were professional philosophers, he may truly be said to have convicted them of gross professional incompetence. Members of academic schools of philosophy, trained in universities, have often adopted a superior attitude to Lenin, in so far as they have condescended to take any note of him at all—regarding him as some sort of obstreperous outsider with a political axe to grind, who did not understand the niceties of philosophical procedure. But professionally speaking, as a philosopher, he was a good deal more competent than most of *them.*

The Concept of "Matter"

The philosophers against whom Lenin argued in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* maintained that the concept of "matter" was a merely confused illusory concept, untenable in the light of science. Scientific thought, they maintained, must replace it by the concept of "sensations", or "given sense data", and must regard what is popularly termed "our knowledge of the material world" as nothing but a collection of hypotheses about our sensations and the orders in which we may expect to experience them.

Having said that the concept of "matter" was confused, they substituted for it only their own confusions. Lenin demonstrated that "the analysis of sensations", which claimed to make everything clear, was itself nothing but an incredible mix-up of confusions, inconsistencies and *non-sequiturs.* He then proceeded to the scientific definition of the allegedly confused concept of "matter".

> "Their denial of matter", Lenin wrote, "consists in denying the existence of an external objective source of our sensations, of an objective reality corresponding to our sensations . . . Matter is that which, acting on our sense organs, produces sensations. Matter is the objective reality given to us in sensation . . . The concept of matter . . . implies nothing but objective reality existing independently of the human mind and reflected by it."

In the light of this clarification of the concept of "matter" Lenin, in his chapter on "Philosophical Idealism and the Recent Revolution in Natural Science", dealt with the contention of philosophers that discoveries in physics meant that physical science no longer employed the concept of "matter", or that "matter has disappeared".

Of course, he explained, the discoveries of physics show that crude ideas of matter as consisting of lumps of immutable substance must be discarded. But that does not mean that "matter has disappeared". It simply means that as a result of deeper investigations into the processes of "objective reality given to us in sensation", of "objective reality existing independently of the human mind",

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we have achieved more adequate ideas about real material processes.

> "The limit within which we have hitherto known matter is vanishing and our knowledge is penetrating deeper," Lenin wrote. "Properties of matter are disappearing which formerly seemed absolute, immutable and primary . . . and which are now revealed to be relative and characteristic only of certain states of matter. For the sole 'property' of matter with whose recognition philosophical materialism is bound up is the property of *being an objective reality*, of existing outside our mind . . .
>
> "While yesterday the profundity of . . . knowledge did not go beyond the atom, and today does not go beyond the electron and ether, dialectical materialism insists on the temporary, relative, approximate character of these *milestones* in the knowledge of nature gained by the progressing science of man. The electron is as *inexhaustible* as the atom, nature is infinite, but it infinitely exists . . .
>
> "Human reason has discovered many amazing things in nature and will discover still more, and will thereby increase its power over nature."

Space, Time and Causality

In further clarification of the concept of "matter" Lenin went on to deal with space and time, and with causality. The philosophers of sensation had tied themselves in knots trying to explain how space and time are nothing but constructs from the relations of sensations, and how the concept of causality is nothing but an elaborate way of describing how diverse sensations generally follow one another in our experience.

> "Recognising the existence of objective reality . . . independently of our mind, materialism must also inevitably recognise the objective reality of time and space," Lenin wrote.
>
> And he continued: "The mutability of human conceptions of space and time no more refutes the objective reality of space and time than the mutability of scientific knowledge of the structure and forms of matter in motion refutes the objective reality of the external world . . . It is one thing, how, with the help of various sense organs, man perceives space and how . . . abstract ideas of space are derived from these perceptions; it is an entirely different thing whether there is an objective reality independent of mankind which corresponds to these perceptions and conceptions of mankind."

The objective material processes in space and time are causal processes, Lenin also insisted. True, "the human conception of cause and effect always somewhat simplifies the objective connection of the phenomena of nature, reflecting it only approximately, artificially isolating one or another aspect of a single world process". But that does not mean that causality is only a figment of our own minds.

The Objective World and its Reflection in Our Minds

In these arguments Lenin affirmed and elaborated again and again the basic materialist position, that all our perceptions, and all the concepts we elaborate from them, are the reflections of material processes taking place in space and time.

The reflection of the material world in human perceptions and in human concepts is always and inevitably partial and one-sided, and may become distorted and falsified in all kinds of ways. But its source lies in objective reality existing independently of the human mind, and its truth depends on how well or how badly it corresponds to the material reality.

In human practice we bring our ideas into correspondence with objective reality, and when we do so it is verified by the success of our practice.

"The sole source of our knowledge is sensation," Lenin wrote. Sensations are the means whereby we get to know the objective world.

> "The objective reality," he continued, "is copied, photographed and reflected by our sensations, while existing independently of them . . . Acceptance or rejection of the concept 'matter' is a question of the confidence man places in the evidence of his senses . . . To regard our sensations as images of the external world, to recognise objective truth, to hold the materialist theory of knowledge—these are all one and the same thing."

Materialists must recognise, he declared, "the relativity of our knowledge"—in the sense that how we know, how much we know, and how we express what we know, depends on and is limited by our circumstances at any time. But this does not mean "a denial of any objective measure or model existing independently of humanity to which our relative knowledge approximates".

Dialectics—the Concrete Analysis of Concrete Conditions

In *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* there is no systematic exposition and defence of Marxist dialectics, like that of materialism. The reason is that the book is in no sense a systematic exposition of Marxist philosophical theory, but a polemic in which the fight was waged for a *materialist* standpoint against those who were seeking to replace it by a philosophy of sensations. So the whole emphasis is on materialism.

Lenin's published explanations about Marxist philosophy were always polemical. Philosophy was for him not a theoretical system to be expounded but a weapon to be used.

So when it comes to dialectics, he never tried to write down any set of so-called "laws of dialectics". But he wrote and spoke about dialectics when

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involved in polemics with people who were failing to grasp the real factors of change and the real complexities within a given situation, and who were proposing theories and policies based on abstract and doctrinaire ideas rather than on a concrete analysis.

Thus Lenin concluded his pamphlet *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*, written in 1904 after the congress at which the split of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks took place, with "A Few Words on Dialectics".

> "Our struggle cannot be understood at all," he wrote, "unless the concrete circumstances of each battle are studied. But once that is done we shall clearly find that the development does actually proceed dialectically, by way of contradictions . . . Genuine dialectics . . . studies the inevitable turns, proving that they were inevitable by a detailed study of the process of development in all its concreteness. The basic principle of dialectics is that there is no such thing as abstract truth, truth is always concrete".

What he insists on here is that nothing can be understood unless "the concrete circumstances are studied". Then it becomes clear that "the development does actually proceed dialectically, by way of contradiction". "Genuine dialectics" is "a detailed study of the process of development in all its concreteness".

For Lenin the essential thing in Marxism, the essence of Marxist dialectic, was the concrete analysis of concrete conditions. Only in that way, and never by applying a preconceived abstract scheme of dialectical development, could the real dialectic of real processes be discovered.

Against Abstract Schemes

Earlier, in the book *What the Friends of the People are and How they fight the Social-Democrats*, published in 1894, Lenin had entered into polemics with opponents who had tried to discredit the Marxist account of the laws of social development by making out that it consisted in arbitrarily applying to everything an abstract scheme of so-called "Hegelian triads", according to which everything must always take place in accordance with the pattern of "thesis, antithesis, synthesis".

> "To attempt to prove anything by triads is absurd," Lenin wrote. ". . . What Marx and Engels called the dialectical method is nothing more nor less than the scientific method in sociology, which consists in regarding society as a living organism in a constant state of development, the study of which requires an objective analysis of the relations of production which constitute the given social formation and an investigation of its laws of functioning and development".

Again, when a discussion over trade union policy took place after the Soviet Revolution, in 1921, Lenin read to Bukharin a lecture on dialectics.

> "Dialectics demands the all-sided consideration of relationships in their concrete development . . .
>
> "In the first place, in order really to know an object we must embrace, study, all its sides, all connections . . . We shall never achieve this completely, but the demand for all-sidedness is a safeguard against mistakes and rigidity. Secondly, dialectical logic demands that we take an object in its development, its 'self-movement' . . . in its changes . . . Thirdly, the whole of human experience should enter the full 'definition' of an object as a criterion of the truth and as a practical index of the object's connection with what man requires. Fourthly, dialectical logic teaches that 'there is no abstract truth, truth is always concrete' . . .
>
> "In order to put the question properly we must always pass from empty abstractions to the concrete . . ."

It is perhaps not very difficult to see the connection between Lenin's insistence that dialectics means "detailed study of the process of development in all its concreteness" or "the all-sided consideration of relationships in their concrete development", and what he wrote in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* about the objective reality of material processes in space and time which constitute the "objective measure or model existing independently of humanity to which our relative knowledge approximates".

Real processes go on, and our business is to make our conceptions of them approximate to them as much as we can. That demands "detailed study of the process", "all-sided consideration of relationships in their concrete development".

The revolutionary demand for theory that is dialectical is one and the same as the demand for theory that is materialist.

The Philosophical Notebooks: "On Dialectics"

If we now turn to Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks* we find that, subsequently to *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, he devoted a great deal of attention to the study of dialectics.

In some notes made "On the Question of Dialectics", in 1915, we find him insisting that the essential thing in dialectics is

> "the recognition (discovery) of the contradictory, mutually exclusive, opposite tendencies in all phenomena and processes of nature (including mind and society). The condition for the knowledge of all processes of the world . . . is the knowledge of them as a unity of opposites".
>
> This, he wrote, "furnishes the key to the self-movement of everything existing; it alone furnishes

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> the key to the 'leaps', the 'break in continuity', to the 'transformation into the opposite', to the destruction of the old and the emergence of the new."

This is in line with what he briefly wrote about the Marxist dialectic in his article on *Karl Marx* written for a Russian Encyclopaedia in 1914:

> "A development that seemingly repeats the stages already passed, but repeats them otherwise, on a higher basis ('negation of negation'), a development, so to speak, in spirals, not in a straight line; a development by leaps, catastrophes, revolutions; breaks in continuity; the transformation of quantity into quality; the inner impulses to development, imparted by the contradiction and conflict of the various forces and tendencies acting on a given body, or within a given phenomenon, or within a given society; the interdependence and the closest, indissoluble connection of all sides of every phenomenon, a connection that provides a uniform, law-governed, universal process of motion—such are some of the features of dialectics as a richer (than the ordinary) doctrine of development."

"The Elements of Dialectics"

Of greatest significance in the *Philosophical Notebooks* are Lenin's notes on Hegel's *Science of Logic*. Near the conclusion of these he seeks to sum up "the elements of dialectics".

The first consideration, he says, is "objectivity". In studying anything one must then seek to grasp the totality of its "manifold relations" with other things, and in this context its own development, "its own movement, its own life". One must seek to unravel "the internally contradictory tendencies and sides" of every subject of investigation, so as to grasp "the sum and unity of opposites" and "the struggle of these opposites" as their respective potentialities are unfolded.

This demands "the union of analysis and synthesis —the break-down of the separate parts and the totality, the summation of these parts". Thence comes the understanding of the inter-relatedness of things, "the transitions of every determination, quality, feature, side, property into every other", "the endless process of the deepening of man's knowledge of things, phenomena, processes, from appearance to essence and from less profound to more profound essence".

In this way, he goes on, one can proceed from the mere registration of the orders in which things in fact appear (which is all that the so-called scientific empiricist philosophers demand) "to causality, and from one form of connection and reciprocal dependence to another, deeper, more general form".

By this kind of application of dialectics, he concludes, one grasps "the repetition at a higher stage of certain features, properties, etc., of the lower", "the apparent return to the old", "the struggle of content with form and conversely— the throwing off of the old form, the transformation of the content", "the transition of quantity into quality . . .".

The Deepening of Knowledge: from "Appearance" to "Essence"

In Hegel's *Science of Logic* there was set forth, though, as Marx had said, only in a mystified idealist way, the immensely significant idea of the logical development of the "categories" of thought whereby the human mind proceeds from a merely superficial conception of things as they immediately appear to us in our perceptions to an understanding of the real processes and relationships that determine the appearances.

For Hegel, the "categories" of thought were not, as they had been for Kant and for the "neo-Kantian" philosophers whom Lenin attacked in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, merely the ways in which we try to "bring order" into the jumble of our own sensations. They were the ways we arrive at ever deeper, more adequate comprehension of objective reality.

In the *Philosophical Notebooks* Lenin was grappling with the profound, but very obscurely expressed, conception of Hegel, concerning "the endless process of the deepening of man's knowledge of things, from appearance to essence, and from less profound to more profound essence".

It was in line with this that, in his article for *Under the Banner of Marxism* on how to conduct "militant materialism", Lenin advised "the systematic study of Hegelian dialectic from a materialist standpoint".

> "Of course," Lenin wrote, "this study, this interpretation, this propaganda of Hegelian dialectics is extremely difficult, and the first experiments in this direction will undoubtedly be accompanied by errors. But only he who never does anything never commits errors. Taking as our basis Marx's method of applying the Hegelian dialectics materialistically conceived, we can and should treat dialectics from all sides . . .
>
> "The editors and contributors should, in my opinion, be a kind of 'Society of Materialist Friends of Hegelian Dialectics'. Modern natural scientists will find (if they know how to seek, and if we learn to help them) in the Hegelian dialectics materialistically interpreted a series of answers to the philosophical problems which are being raised by the revolution in natural science and which make the intellectual admirers of bourgeois fashion stumble into reaction. Unless it sets itself such a task, and systematically fulfils it, materialism cannot be militant materialism."

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Carrying on from "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism"

In *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* Lenin made a series of telling points affirming the existence of the real material world in polemic against one particular school of idealist philosophers—the philosophers of sensation. His subsequent notes and statements about dialectics, and about Hegel's exposition of dialectics in particular, show clearly enough that, in his view, there was need to carry on from that to the fuller development of a militant materialism.

This would require the fuller development of conceptions of logic and of materialist dialectics away from the original positions taken up by Hegel, and it should be done in line with the development of the sciences and of the application of the sciences in the revolutionising of society.

It seems to me that our reading of *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* today, and what we make of it, must therefore be guided by awareness that Lenin himself showed the need to carry on from there. Many of its formulations, made in polemic against philosophers who, up-to-date as they then thought themselves are now very much out-of-date, need to be *superseded* (that is to say, replaced but at the same time carried on) by new formulations grounded on further studies of materialist dialectics applied to new problems set by new phases of social development in general and of the development of the sciences in particular.

This means that simply to repeat today what one finds in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, as though it were the final word of Marxist philosophy, is a big mistake. And no-one who appreciates the real revolutionary content of Leninism would think of doing so on the occasion of his centenary.

The Successors of "Empirio-Criticism"

For one thing, as I have said, Lenin always developed the standpoint of revolutionary philosophy in polemics. Today, simply to repeat Lenin's polemics against the sensationist philosophers of fifty years ago is flogging a dead horse. It no longer hits a living target. For the rather more sophisticated and professionally competent philosophy in vogue today, in particular the so-called "linguistic" philosophy here in Britain, is in its way quite as much opposed to the doctrine that knowledge is confined to sensation as Lenin was.

Lenin exposed fifty years ago what he called "the incredible muddles" contained in that philosophy. If you read today the books and articles by, say, Professor Ryle of Oxford, or by the late Professor Austin of the same university, you will find that they too have, in their own style, pretty effectively accomplished the same refutation. They might, indeed, have saved themselves and their students some trouble had they realised that Lenin had already done it while they were still in the prep. school. Some of the arguments they use, without acknowledgement, as their own, were originally Lenin's.

But when these philosophers refute the idea that we know only our own sensations, they do not do it to clear away idealist deception and establish militant materialism as a fighting philosophy for the revolutionary movement.

Far from it. What they seek to establish—and indeed, to do them justice, do establish—is only the rather obvious and even trivial point that, when we use words to communicate information, we use them to communicate information about the material world we live in and not simply about our own subjective experiences. Thus if I tell you "this is a table", I am telling you about the table, not about my own sensations.

The Criticism of Contemporary Bourgeois Philosophy

The criticism of contemporary bourgeois philosophy is not the criticism that it opposes materialism by denying that we get to know "objective reality existing independently of the human mind and reflected by it". Such a criticism is wide of the mark.

The criticism is that it opposes militant dialectical materialism by denying that in order to change the world we must find the practical ways of pushing our knowledge from the mere knowledge of appearances, knowledge of things as they immediately affect us, or appear to us, to knowledge of the real processes in their "manifold relationships", with all their "contradictory tendencies and sides".

In *Capital* and in other key writings, Marx based his whole criticism of "bourgeois economics" and "bourgeois sociology" on the contention that, in his words, they dealt "only with appearances". The bourgeois economist or sociologist deals only with how capitalism *looks* to the trader, industrialist or businessman, not with the "hidden" processes of the economic exploitation of labour on which it is based, nor with the social contradictions that presage its end.

The key criticism of the so-called "scientific" philosophies of the bourgeoisie remains and, in my opinion, will remain, not that they deny the reality of the material world (which many do not deny), but that they treat our scientific knowledge of this reality only on the level of knowledge of "appearances".

In this way bourgeois philosophy has been and continues to be the generalised affirmation of the bourgeois view about human society. In this way, too, whatever sort of anti-clerical "agnosticism" some philosophers may profess, it has been and continues to be the faithful ally of what Lenin

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called "fideism", which leaves open every question about what lies behind the appearances to an answer given by faith or by religious authority.

The Fight for Militant Materialism

Lenin's great achievement in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* was to have revived the fight for militant materialism and for the development of revolutionary philosophy at a time when Marxism was being simultaneously ossified into a dead orthodoxy and revised out of existence.

To carry this on in our own conditions demands that we should follow precisely the advice which Lenin gave and the further studies he himself began. We must "take as a basis Marx's method of applying the Hegelian dialectic materialistically conceived". And we must try further to clarify and develop the theoretical principles of "the endless process of the deepening of man's knowledge", understanding that this is not merely a matter of "interpreting the world" but, as Marx said, of "changing it".

Not the bare question of the existence of the material world and its reflection in our perceptions and concepts, but the intricate questions of the dialectic of real development and of knowledge of it, with the relation of appearance to reality, as presented in our real activity of changing the world and changing ourselves, become the central points for inquiry and argument.

"Human Sensuous Activity"

In this context it is advisable, in my view, to take another look at some of what Lenin wrote, in polemic against the philosophy of sensations, about the relation of sensations with external material reality. I quoted it earlier: "The objective reality is copied, photographed . . . by our sensations, while existing independently of them". Sensations are "images of the external world".

Lenin was here criticising a philosophy which said that the objects of knowledge were sensations or sense-data. No, he replied, the objects of knowledge are material objects, and sensations are simply "copies" of material objects. They are not independent objects at all, but are like images in a mirror, or like photographs, produced only as copies of what is imaged or photographed.

But the criticism of the philosophy of sensation must, I believe, become a more radical criticism than that. And this criticism was in fact already foreshadowed in the Hegelian dialectic as well as in certain other passages of *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism.*

The philosophy against which Lenin directed his polemic in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* had transformed the materialist truth that all knowledge comes from sensation into the absurd doctrine that all knowledge consists in the description of the order and sequence of our sensations. For it treated what Marx had termed "human sensuous activity" as merely passive reception of "sensations".

Sensation or perception is a human *activity* and not, as the philosophers of sensation made out, a mere passive reception or contemplation of "a sense-datum". When we see something, a kind of photograph is produced in the retina of the eye. But "to see" is not to contemplate a photograph but is an activity in which we use our eyes. It is not the contemplation of any "mental object", another "photograph" like the one on the retina, to which can be given the name of a "sensation" or "sense-datum". The "sensation" or "sense-datum", considered in abstraction from the concrete material activity of perception, is a mere metaphysical abstraction.

The Materialist Interpretation of Hegel's Logic

Hegel had insisted—and herein consisted his main criticism of so-called "empiricism"—that knowledge, from the simplest kind of perceptual knowledge up to the most highly generalised knowledge through concepts, is human activity.

Materialistically interpreted, as Lenin following Marx had insisted it must be, this meant that philosophy should trace the development of our activity of knowing, as development of man's practical activity in the material world, from the knowledge of objects as they immediately affect our senses through to the development of ever deeper, more profound, more concrete and more generalised knowledge of the objective processes and relationships, including those of mind and society.

Hegel's attempt, in *The Science of Logic*, to work out a logical sequence of "categories" was, materialistically interpreted, an attempt to work out how, from initial knowledge through the senses of things as they first appear to us, we proceed in practice with "the endless process of man's deepening knowledge of things".

Such categories as those of "substance" and "causality", the relation of "form and content", of "appearance and reality", and so on, are so many conceptual stages reached in this process of man's knowledge of the world, reached in his *activity* through which he learns to master and to change his environment, and to change his society and himself.

From this standpoint it would seem fairly clear that, just as Lenin's polemical formulations about sensation in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* need to be further elaborated, and in some respects revised, so do, for example, his polemical formulations about material substance and about causality.

Lenin's book was a great landmark in the develop-

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ment of militant materialism. But when a landmark is established, the task of revolutionaries is not to sit there and enjoy the view, but to press on.

The Philosophy of Man

It is worth noting, in concluding this brief attempt to appreciate Lenin's contribution to revolutionary philosophy, that when he studied Hegel, and advised the materialistic study of Hegel, he was not acquainted with most of the early writings of Marx in which Marx himself had first grappled with the complexities of Hegelian philosophy and superseded it. For they only became available after Lenin's death. There seems little doubt that, had he been able, Lenin would have eagerly studied them. So his advice to study and learn from Hegel may be supplemented by the advice to study and learn from the writings of the young Marx.

From these writings of Marx, as we now know them, there emerges a profoundly humanist point of view, in which the central object of all human interest is the condition and development of man himself. The central subject matter of philosophy is human activity. And philosophical materialism becomes, not an abstract theory about the existence of matter in motion, but a concrete philosophy of man, about the nature and conditions of human activity, man's relations with the environment from which he springs and on which he depends, and with his fellow men, and man's real development and potentialities.

From the arguments with bourgeois philosophers about whether the material world exists and whether, if it does, we can know anything about it, we need to advance on the road of the revolutionary philosophy of man. This is the road of the struggle for communism.

From the immense theoretical contribution made by Lenin we need above all to learn not to falter in the spirit of revolutionary partisanship which he proclaimed and practised; not to get taken in by any of the latest fashions and facile analyses of those who, however acute their critical treatment of particular problems, remain pillars of the capitalist establishment; and to creatively pursue the course of preserving and carrying further in opposition to all its detractors and enemies, a practical scientific revolutionary theory for the revolutionary movement.

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After the Sham Elections in Portugal

A New Stage in the Struggle

We print below a statement of the Political Commission of the Central Committee of the Portuguese Communist Party.

The Fascist electoral fraud of October, 1969, in Portugal marked the end of an important phase in the Portuguese people's struggle for democracy.

The working class and the whole democratic movement achieved great successes in political action, in organisation, and in their fight for immediate demands. The demagogic pretence of "liberalisation" was unmasked. Fascism lost the political initiative, and showed itself incapable of solving the country's problems. The Portuguese people turned the tables on the Fascists who were manoeuvring to emerge from their crisis, to extend their bases, to buttress the State structure, and to curb popular discontent. The Regime came out more discredited than ever with its internal contradictions sharpened, and with less room for manoeuvre. For the working class, the Portuguese people, and the democratic movement, a new phase of the struggle has begun: difficult and complicated, no doubt, but full of possibilities and hopeful perspectives.

1. The Popular Opposition Shows itself as a Great Force in National Politics

In the period that elapsed from the naming of M. Caetano as Head of Government on Septem-

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ber 27th, 1968, until the sham elections held on October 26th, 1969, the fight against the Dictatorship reached heights as significant as any attained during the 45 years of Fascist rule. Developing momentum from the first months of 1969 on three main fronts—the immediate working class demands, the political fight, and the students' struggle—the movement broke up the political stagnation and culminated in the great activities of the "electoral" period.

Popular action overcame and went beyond many of the limits which the Government tried to impose upon it. At the same time as hundreds of thousands of Portuguese men and women, in broad meetings and demonstrations, were putting forward their fundamental democratic demands, many of these objectives were being won through action. The working class and the democratic forces did not content themselves with raising the banner of popular protest and demanding their liberties and rights. In spite of threats, bans, declarations of illegality, and repressive measures, the fight for the right to organise also expressed itself in de-facto organisation. The fight for the right to strike also took the shape of actual strikes. The actions undertaken, the advances made, the successes achieved, show this is the right road.

The Opposition came out of this period reinvigorated by thousands of activists; by the growing, and decisive participation of the working class and the youth in political action; by the democratic practices initiated within structures and movements; by the wave of militancy coming from below—coming from the masses. In the field of the legal struggle the traditional pretensions of the right-wing groupings to preferential representation were ended. A new orientation of the anti-fascist forces became apparent. A wide united movement took its place as the undisputed representative of popular interests and aspirations, aiming at a profound reform of Portuguese society, trusting the people and enjoying their trust, drawing its strength from the support and the activity of the working class and the masses of the people.

While, in this period, the absolute divorce between the Fascist camarilla and the nation was being exposed, the people's Opposition showed itself to be a truly national movement of the masses, a reality of Portuguese life, the legitimate representative of the Portuguese people and its interests, the great force in national politics to whom the future belongs.

2. The Electoral Fraud: a Spectacular Failure for Fascism

The "elections" to the National Assembly which the Fascists hoped to make into a great campaign and a political victory, turned out to be a spectacular failure for the regime and its "liberalising" demagogy.

The Opposition which came on the scene to contest the "elections" was not, as the Fascists had wished, a legal and anti-communist Opposition, pawned out to M. Caetano and being guaranteed by him in return, but a broad movement of the masses against the regime, against demagogy, against the electoral fraud.

In spite of the Government holding in its hands, and using for its own benefit all the resources of the State, in spite of all the hindrances put in the way of the Opposition's activities, the "electoral" campaign was largely dominated by the opposition CDE (Electoral Democratic Committee) with its organisational strength, its enthusiastic meetings and sessions, and its courageous propaganda, as against the empty declarations made by the "National Union" (the Fascist party) in the half-deserted meeting places where it held its sessions. The political battle of the "elections" was won by the Opposition before the "elections" themselves were held.

The official results of the "elections" reveal the fraud that has been committed, and give such evidence of the political defeat of the Regime and its "liberal" demagogy, that the fascists themselves have stopped talking about them.

Where there was no supervision, and where, according to the Fascist press itself, the crowds at the ballot-boxes were small, the Government announced the highest percentages of voters—around 80 per cent in Braganca, Portalegre, and Guarda. Where there was supervision and "exceptional crowds" the official voting figures in relation to names on the list were lowest—46 per cent in Lisbon and Setubal, 49 per cent in Leiria and Ponta Delgada. The fraud was stripped naked for all to see.

In spite of the falsification of the voting lists, drawn up without any supervision; in spite of the hindrances to any revision of the lists by the Opposition; in spite of the official inclusion of 1,800,000 voters as against scarcely 28,000 enrolments of "claimants"; in spite of the exclusion from the list of the mass of the working people and the overwhelming majority of the democrats; in spite of the absence of supervision in almost all voting areas where the Fascists could make the traditional "chapeladas" (votes *en bloc*), the results give the Government lists hardly 50 per cent of the voters on the "electoral roll"—less than a quarter of the 4,000,000 Portuguese who, according to the Fascist laws, have the right to vote, and hardly 15 per cent of those who are over 21 years of age! The official "election" results are in themselves an exposure of the isolation of

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Fascism, its fear of the people's verdict, its scorn for the nation's will, its illegitimate and arbitrary character.

The fact that, even under these conditions, according to the figures which the fascists were obliged to declare, the Opposition polled 130,000 votes (34 per cent of the voters in Setubal, 25 per cent in Lisbon and Ponta Delgada, and more than 50 per cent in some electoral districts) shows how much support it enjoys, even in districts where the Fascist falsified the voting lists.

The activity developed, the positions won, the strengthening of the Opposition, the very results of the sham elections, confirm how correct it was, in the existing political situation, to contest the elections, to put forward candidates, to join in the "electoral" campaign, and to go to the polls.

Abstention from the "elections", as advocated by the liberal bourgeoisie of the Social Democratic Action Group and by some leftist groups, would have meant sacrificing opportunities for action for the sake of mere passivity or pseudo-revolutionary phrase-mongering. It is a caricature of the truth for these groups, whose influence on the masses has been shown to be insignificant in this time of struggle, now to pretend that the high percentage of "abstentions" was the outcome of their abstentionist slogans! It was not a question of many abstentions, but of the impossibility of polling openly the votes of fictitious electors in view of the disqualifications (affecting nearly 50 per cent of the names registered by the Government) wherever the Opposition succeeded in having supervision of the voting.

The whole activity developed by the democratic forces around the Fascist "elections", both before and during the campaign itself, up to the last minute, represents a great political victory which allows the fight to continue after the "elections" with new forces, from new positions, and with renewed confidence.

3. Unity Renewed in Action and Through Action

One of the main objectives of M. Caetano's "liberalising" tactics was to divide the anti-fascist movement, create a meek and collaborationist Opposition, and isolate the Portuguese Communist Party so as to split off the democratic movement from its chief organisational force—the only really revolutionary one.

This objective was not achieved because the most influential and militant democrats—the communists, the catholics, and the socialists—took the initiative into their own hands, unmasking the demagogy of "liberalisation", organising themselves, defining their aims, and developing action on an ever broader scale. It was not achieved because the predominating desire for unity, the growing participation of the workers and the masses of the people in the struggle, and the waging of the ideological battle, lessened the influence and increasingly neutralised and isolated the Right opportunists of the Portuguese Socialist Action (ASP), who, looking forward to attaining a favoured legality, sought to divide and paralyse the democratic movement—as did the leftists, with other motives.

Instead of a fictitious unity, obtained at the cost of concessions which would have turned the democratic movement aside from its fundamental aims, condemning it to passivity in the wake of political bosses and personalities returned by backstage intrigues and collaboration with the Fascists, there was a real unity, forged in action and through action, between political trends, without discrimination against one or the other, based on the unity of the working class and of the mass of the people, and on the unselfish common effort of thousands of militants, coming from the people and linked to the people.

One of the richest lessons of this period of struggle was the continuous failure of opportunism—the way in which life itself gave the lie, day by day, to its analyses, its plans, its forecasts and its pretentions, and the contrast between its growing isolation and the rapid broadening of the CDE movement. The opportunists saw themselves being left behind, and fell back on a second plan. When it put up its splitting list of candidates, the opportunists of the CEUD group (dominated by the Portuguese Socialist Action), expecting to profit by the exclusion from the electoral register of the mass of the workers who were the main strength of the united movement, dreamt of recovering at the polls its lost prestige, and an argument for its pretensions to supremacy. Once again they deceived themselves. In the three districts in which the CEUD put up candidates they failed to get even half the votes that the CED polled, and in Lisbon hardly as much as a quarter.

The experience of a year of struggle shows the road to follow. Reinforcing its internal unity, striving always for agreement on common action with all other anti-fascists, without any discrimination, the united movement cannot slacken its fight against the splitters, against opportunism of the right or of the left, and against collaboration—negative trends which, though beaten, are not dead, and can even find new and more dangerous expression in the complex development of the struggle that lies ahead.

The establishment of a renewed unity, forged in popular action against the Dictatorship, and in the fight against opportunism, is one of the great

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achievements of this period. Such unity is the surest guarantee of the consolidation of the successes of the past year, and the carrying on of the fight in the new phase that opens after the "electoral" fraud.

4. The Fight for Legality Goes On

The possibilities of carrying on the fight openly, in the light of day, are not exhausted, for the Opposition, with the voting in the sham "elections". It would be a serious error to give in to fascist pressure and threats, to deny the possibilities of legal activities, and to introduce clandestine organisational modes into the legal structures. Real opportunities still exist for the Opposition to intervene openly in the nation's political life.

The past year was full of instances when arbitrary, unconstitutional, and illegal Fascist bans were overcome by the democratic movement. Before the "elections" the Government proscribed the CDE, but it continued to develop and even achieved temporarily, for the "electoral" period, official recognition of its legality: a recognition which was, indeed, only a confirmation of a "de facto" situation. After the "elections" the CDE was once more declared illegal, but all the same at its National Meeting, on November 9th, the CDE decided to carry on. Co-ordination between districts was forbidden, but all the same it took place. Discussion of the colonial wars was forbidden, none the less the colonial wars were discussed. Censorship prior to publication was imposed on all propaganda, but the movement, with the support of the masses, ignored it. Street meetings, the use of loud-speakers, and the prolongation of sessions beyond midnight, were banned—but in most cases the authorities had to yield.

Under a Fascist Dictatorship the right to engage in legal activity is not won by begging the Government to recognise legality. It is won by legal activity itself, whether it is officially recognised or no. Legal action, precisely because it is legal, does not need express permission. The right to carry on the movement was won by carrying it on, by maintaining and defending its committees, structures, leading organs, and propaganda—broadening more and more the organisation, the meetings and assemblies, the fight for immediate aims, and all legal democratic activity. The stronger, the more consolidated, and the broader the organisation becomes; the greater the authority of its leading and co-ordinating bodies; the more intimate the links between the leadership and the rank and file; the wider the activities of the masses of the people—the more will the movement be protected against all the efforts of the Fascists to silence it.

The fight for legality goes on.

5. Be Ready with the Answer to Demagogy and Repression

The electoral swindle did not enlarge Fascism's room for manoeuvre—indeed it narrowed it still further. The situation created does not allow the Fascists to return easily to the immobility of Salazarism. M. Caetano's "Government of Sacred Union" will be under the necessity of keeping up the demagogic pretence of "liberalisation". One must expect new measures, spectacular in form but changing nothing in substance, meant to damp down the struggle by seeming to meet popular demands.

The Opposition must give a prompt answer to all such demagogic measures unmasking them, and persisting in the fight they are intended to paralyse. In a demagogic response to one of the most insistent of popular demands, the Government announced on November 17th the "dissolution" of the PIDE, the secret police, while retaining it, in fact, under the new name of the Direcçao General de Segurança. This apparent concession actually gives the secret police a greater legality, and ought to provide a new impetus to demand that this odious body of professional torturers and murderers be disbanded in reality and not in words alone. If the Opposition remains united and determined, if it carries on the fight fearlessly, and trusts in the support of the masses, Fascist demagogy can be used against Fascism. Caught between its own demagogy and the strength of the popular movement, the Government will be forced to make real concessions.

It would, however, be a dangerous illusion to think that position after position will be yielded up. Fascism is in no mood to capitulate, and it still has a powerful State apparatus, trained, organised, and armed, and ready to suppress popular discontent. If in the past year Fascism did not have recourse to a widespread wave of repression, it was because it hoped for rewards from its demagogic "liberalisation". It hoped to broaden its internal and international support, and to deceive, disorientate, split, and emasculate the militant spirit of the people. And any such repression would provoke precisely the reactions it was supposed to prevent.

The repressive actions that were taken during the year, show, however, that the iron fist of Fascism is hidden under the velvet glove of "liberalisation".

The democratic movement, the working class, and the whole Portuguese people should oppose the Fascist repression with an unbroken and fearless unity, with organised force, with mass action, and active solidarity throughout the whole movement in whatever sector it may be attacked. Only thus can we hold and reinforce the positions

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already won, defend our right to take part in political life, achieve new successes, and carry on the fight to victory.

6. The Fight for Working Class Demands

During the past year, taking advantage of favourable circumstances, the working class fearlessly took the offensive, engaged in great struggles, and achieved important successes. Apart from obtaining satisfaction, however partial, of many of their demands, wage increases among others, the fight for working class claims took on a political character that had significant repercussions.

The strikes and the other struggles of the workers were the first great organised reply to M. Caetano's demagogic "liberalisation". They gave a decisive impetus to the democratic movement and to the strengthening of anti-fascist unity. Here was the point of departure for the growing participation of the workers in the political fight—a participation that became the determining factor in the months preceding the "electoral" sham.

The struggle for working class demands became, as the year went on, integrated into the democratic movement's offensive, and acquired a high political significance when, within six days of the sham "elections", the railwaymen went on strike on October 26th. With magnificent organisation and solidarity they paralysed, for the space of an hour, the Lisbon railroads and a great part of the railway network and the workshops in the main centres.

The worsening of living conditions; Caetano's wage-freeze policy; the general rise of prices and of fares; the threat of an increase in the price of bread; all this made it necessary for the workers to intensify and extend their fight in defence of their vital interests. Very favourable conditions were created by the deepening crisis of the regime, the demagogic policy of "liberalisation", the broadening of the political movement, and the stimulus of victories and advances already achieved.

The Government and the employers will continue to use the most brutal repression against the aspirations of the workers, as they did recently in the case of the dock-workers of the giant shipbuilding and repair Lisnave enterprise in Lisbon.

Spontaneity, and the lack of unity and a solid organisation, have led, in some instances, to severe defeats. Only the formation of committees supported by the workers—only the creation of such new organisations as are called for by each stage of the fight—only unity, militancy, and determination—only broad movements of class solidarity: only thus can the resistance of the employers and the repression of the Fascists be confronted, and the workers led on to victory.

The employers and the Government seek to soften their repressive measures with vague promises. In this way they try to put off and to deceive the workers. They try to corrupt and divide them, and break their militant determination, so that, tomorrow, they can go back on their word and refuse to meet the demands put forward. The workers will not let themselves be so deceived. They will exact fulfilment of the promises of wage rises made at the end of the year. They will carry on the fight till their claims are met.

The fight for economic demands is increasingly associated with demands of a political character, such as the right to strike and the right to trade-union organisation. This has the highest political significance. The struggle for working class demands will continue to be one of the main battle-fronts against the Fascists.

7. Immediate Political Demands at the Present Time

Once more there is an end to the illusions of those who think that the Fascist regime can be got rid of by way of "elections" controlled and organised by the Fascists themselves. To take the holding of future Fascist "elections" as the fundamental aim of democratic action would be to accept a brief appearance, every four years, in political life as being the whole mission of the democratic movement. It would mean capitulating to Fascism, and resigning oneself to it lasting for ever. It would mean betraying the hopes and aspirations of thousands of militants, and of the broad masses of the people. It is correct for the Opposition to prepare now for the coming registration of electors, and the approaching local elections. It is correct to develop, from this foundation, broad activities, and to brace oneself for a continuous and effective intervention, in the light of day, in the nation's political life. But the fight in the arena of Fascist "elections" cannot be the central aim of the democratic movement: it cannot even be thought of as the only or most important immediate objective.

In the present phase, in order to recruit for the democratic movement the political battalions and the organised strength to enable it to engage in decisive battles and carry them through to the end, it is essential to fight for the following aims:

1. *for the freedom of association, freedom of speech and thought, freedom of meeting and demonstration, the right to strike, and freedom of trade-unionism;*
2. *for the abolition of the censorship and for the right to information;*

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3. *for the permanent recognition of the legal existence of the democratic opposition and of its organisation and means of propaganda;*
4. *for the release of all political prisoners and the return of the exiles; for the complete abolition of "security measures"; for an inquiry into Fascist crimes and abuses of authority; for the disbanding of the fascist "Portuguese Legion", and the effective dissolution of the PIDE, now hiding under the name of the "Direccao General de Segurança";*
5. *for the democratisation of mass organisations such as the state controlled Trade Unions (Sindicatos) and the Students' Associations;*
6. *for meeting the economic demands of the workers and the toiling people on wages, prices, and taxes;*
7. *for the immediate ending of the three African colonial wars, insisting on the urgency of establishing contacts and opening negotiations with legitimate representatives of the peoples of Angola, Guinea (Bissau), and Mozambique;*
8. *for a complete reversal in foreign politics on the basis of peaceful relations with all peoples.*

This is not only a question of aims to be stated, and demands to be put forward. It is a matter of aims that must inspire every action. To attain them it is necessary to call the masses to battle, and to bring into being the most diverse movements and organisations.

Apart from initiatives already taken, and positive work already done, the conditions are ripe for the creation of some great national movements:

—A NATIONAL YOUTH MOVEMENT, made possible by the outstanding part that the young workers played in last year's struggles, and above all in the "electoral" campaign, to which it lent its enthusiasm and its dynamism. Made possible, too, by the energy of the students' movement, even if this has been harmed by the negative influence of leftist trends. A national youth movement can become a powerful force in the fight for the fundamental aspirations of Portuguese youth.

—A NATIONAL WOMEN'S MOVEMENT, which, with the impetus of the broad participation of women in economic and political fights, can become a powerful factor in the struggle for democratic liberties, against the colonial wars and in defence of the demands of the women of Portugal.

—A NATIONAL MOVEMENT FOR AMNESTY, which, inspired by the broad support of the masses, and the impetus given in the last few months to the fight for the liberation of political prisoners, has favourable prospects of attaining its objective.

—A NATIONAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT, which, building on the foundation of the fight for economic demands in the enterprises and in the state controlled unions, and encouraged by the unmasking of Fascist syndicalism, will have opportunities of launching a broad offensive in the battle for trade union freedom, and for snatching the "sindicatos" from the grasp of the agents of the employers and the Government.

The accomplishment of these tasks will give an extraordinary impetus to the whole democratic movement.

The events that have taken place since the formation of M. Caetano's Government corroborate the leading role of vanguard of the working class and its Party—the Portuguese Communist Party—in the fight against the Fascist dictatorship, and for the aspirations of the broad masses of the people. Life itself has confirmed the PCP's analysis of the political situation, and of the demagogic "liberalisation", as well as the orientation and the perspectives it has formulated.

Driven underground these 43 years into a rigorous clandestine existence, ferociously persecuted, deprived of many of its best cadres who lie in Fascist gaols, the Portuguese Communist Party fulfils, with honour, its duty towards the workers, the people, and the democratic movement.

Men, women, and young people of all trends of thought, united by the same aspirations, and engaged in the same battle, are fighting side by side with the Communists.

For truly these are common tasks: to make the unity already achieved indestructible; to reinforce our organisation; to carry on, broaden, and raise to a higher level the political action and struggle of the masses; and to transform the democratic movement into an irresistible revolutionary torrent.

This is the road which leads to the final battle, to the destruction of Fascism, and the conquest of liberty.

The Political Commission of the Central Committee of the Portuguese Communist Party.

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Discussion Contributions on:

Why did it happen?

Jack Kay

In attempting to answer Maurice Dobb's question "Why did it happen?", I think we should examine the difference between the period immediately after the Russian revolution and the later "cult of the individual" period. Nobody can argue that from 1917 to the end of the civil war and foreign intervention the situation was anything but extremely difficult. War losses in both people and materials alone were enough to reduce standards to little above starvation levels without taking into account the class struggle in both town and country. Yet socialist legality was maintained; not perfectly of course, but certainly no deliberate injustices were perpetrated by those put into positions of the highest responsibility. By the mid-1930s the picture was not rosy but it had undoubtedly improved, so why was this the time when the distortions occured?

Capitalist Ideas Live On

After the revelations of Stalin's misrule we were told that the background of these events was the weakening of collective leadership and violations of the principles of democratic centralism, but I suspect that Maurice Dobb, like myself, feels that a deeper explanation is needed. The Chinese Party at the time said that these methods of work had their origin in a petty bourgeois mentality, and nobody as far as I am aware, opposed that view, but I think that Lenin in *Left Wing Communism* presented a much deeper analysis of this question which although it predated the events can help us to understand them.

In the chapter "Incorrect Conclusions from Correct Premises" for example, Lenin explains how the ideas of capitalism hang on after the Socialist revolution. This happens not only because the Party, the Soviets, the courts, etc., are "invaded" by bourgeois intellectuals, "for Communism cannot be built up otherwise than with the aid of the human material created by capitalism", but also because the proletarians themselves "do not abandon their petty bourgeois prejudices at one stroke, by a miracle, at the behest of the Virgin Mary, at the behest of a slogan, resolution or decree, but only in the course of a long and difficult mass struggle against mass petty bourgeois influences".

Based on this evaluation, and on the principle expounded by Marx that ideas live on long after the economic foundation on which they developed has died, and because of the nature of the errors themselves, I am driven to the conclusion that methods derived from the past reasserted themselves because the fight outlined by Lenin was abandoned. And it is this change from the mass struggle with collective leadership of the Party as the necessary condition of success, to methods of individual decision, that I see as the key to understanding the distortions. From this basic error, many, grave consequences flowed.

Party and State

In the early days of Soviet power, Lenin, supported by Stalin, fought to defeat Trotsky's idea that the Party should "direct" all the organisations of the working class, and explained how the Party must operate by winning the support of the masses for its policy, and through them, achieving the necessary changes. During Stalin's leadership this principle gave way to a selection by the Party of all leading cadres and at the 18th Congress in 1939, a decision was taken to have the selection of all cadres in the Party and State put into the hands of one body, the Cadres Administration of the Central Committee. The Party took it upon itself to decide who would lead the Trade Unions, the Comsomol, the Co-ops, and in some cases to decide the technical merits of scientific theories.

How could the Party then act as a check on injusticies to individuals?—and if not the Party, then who could? Any disagreement, under these circumstances, at a time of tension and vigilance, could only be properly evaluated if it was expressed openly before the mass of people to whom the complainant is known. Because the mass of the people were not being brought into action in the way Lenin demanded, they stood defenceless before the organs of State power.

At the same time, as we know, changes were made and advances recorded that won the admiration of the progressives of the world, inspired the Socialist movement, the National Liberation movement, and led to the establishment of Communist Parties based on Lenin's creative development of Marxism.

These Communist Parties, as is only natural, took the teachings of the Soviet Union as a whole,

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for they worked, and in any case these deviations from Leninism came gradually, and seemed to be ustified by events. Often the form of the previous practice was maintained and so became established in these parties' leaderships, trained in this way, who transplanted both the good and the bad features, or was it that in all these countries the same conditions existed that Lenin had outlined, and that in the same way a lack of a mass fight against petty bourgeois influences existed?

All this will just be armchair theorising if it does not lead us to answering the main question. "What is the way forward?".

Democratic Centralism

Following the 20th Congress we debated this point, but I believe we were too near the events to make a good job of it, and as a result there emerged two views: the majority, who recognised that the only way a Party which seriously intended to fight for Socialism could organise was by the application of the principles of Democratic Centralism, and those whose concern for minority opinion was greater than their desire for united action. Looking back on the report of the Commission on Inner-Party Democracy, I see weaknesses in both attitudes. The minority view is not based on opposition to the "cult of the individual" but would make us all "individuals" rather than members of a disciplined Party, and this view shows evidence of the same ideological roots as the mistakes of over-centralisation. The majority, who did a good job of defending the principles of democratic centralism, did not go beyond that and examine the methods of work we used and see if in fact they were based firmly on these principles, and such changes as have been made since then seem to be mainly in relaxing discipline rather than putting it on a more solid basis.

The proposals of the Commission subsequently adopted by our Congress reflected the position that the Communist movement generally was taking; a determination to preserve that which had served us well, but an inability to advance beyond it and in proposing "back to democratic centralism" we committed the error that Lenin argued so strongly against—that of presuming we can change ways of thinking by passing resolutions. As a result, many contradictory interpretations of these principles are present in the Party today, and it seems to me that we need to launch this mass discussion and struggle to develop our understanding and confidence in our ability to make continual improvements in our methods of work.

Collective Leadership

This campaign needs to win understanding of the importance of collective leadership in the development of cadres in the Party, in involving our members in activity, in developing self-discipline and responsible attitudes, and in laying the basis of critical and self-critical analysis of campaigns. In the course of this discussion, we should also review our methods of taking decisions and operating them and see how our methods match up to principles, and in this respect we will no doubt encounter difficulties—I suspect particularly in examining our industrial work—but out of solving problems comes a stronger Party. As part of this campaign we should include an explanation of our Party rules and the part they play in maintaining unity, flexibility and a democratic thrashing out differences. This should lead to a firmer attitude to the rules, and show our members that it is the principles embodied in these rules what should guide us, rather than the pragmatic rule-of-thumb methods we so often encounter.

In the course of such a dialogue, we will have to accept the possibility that we may find ourselves in opposition to the practices of some of the Communist Parties in power now. I am thinking not so much of the comparatively small questions of censorship or of the punishing of people for "political" offences, but of matters and methods that affect the way in which all the main decisions are taken, that determine the relationship of the Party to the State and to Parliament, and how it influences the trade unions, and its links with other political parties and organisations of the people.

For example, in Czechoslovakia the present Central Committee of the Party removed the Prime Minister and the Secretary of their Trades Union Congress, and replaced them. This, of course, is not the way the *British Road to Socialism* sees us as operating, and we will need to argue out whether this is a difference of principle, or something that is incidental, or due to temporary factors. But argue it out we must; people will judge us by our answers.

I am aware that these proposals will be seen by some as diversionary, but I see them as necessary if we are to overcome our weaknesses in the development of collective leadership. Moreover, they can if carried out in the right spirit, help us to find the answers to questions that are continually being asked, particularly by young people from all classes, questions about freedom and responsibility, justice and morality, and in the Labour Movement, questions about principles of control, discipline and unity. Never have these questions been asked so insistently, and only Marxism-Leninism provides the basis upon which a satisfactory answer can be found, if only we look for it in a Marxist fashion; that is, in a struggle in which theory and practice go hand in hand, so that the development of both is ensured.

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Bill Carritt

Yes Maurice Dobb is right. It is disturbing that we hesitate to discuss Stalin and therefore cannot evaluate that period in which the world communist movement and our own party grew up.

Reluctance is understandable. It is so difficult, potentially so divisive of our own ranks at home and abroad, so open to abuse by the enemies of socialism. Yet if we do not, the consequences are certainly worse.

Following the 20th Congress of the Soviet Party, when Khruschev made his speech about Stalin, our own Party expressed the view that the explanation given and the subsequent resolution of the Soviet Central Committee left much unanswered, and that the matter required more profound analysis.

We have never contributed to such an analysis. Perhaps we wanted to let the sleeping dogs lie; but they have not left us unworried. Prisoners returned from the camps and wrote books. Perpetuation of bureaucratic methods inside the communist movement delayed the development of socialist democracy, failure to expose the distortions of theory has made it more difficult to find our way in the new circumstances of the sixties.

Because we have not faced up to our past, because we are unsure of our way ahead, our movement is much divided. Those who should be our friends and allies distrust us because we are slower than they to ask the questions which have got to be answered if we are to change the world.

I would therefore ask all readers to return to the articles of Marian Slingova and Maurice Dobb, read and discuss them and write their views to *Marxism Today*.

Party Leadership

Maurice Dobb's contribution provided, to my mind, a very satisfactory brief summary of the general causes of the Stalin period. I will try to answer a more particular question—"How far was the party leadership involved, did it connive willingly, unwillingly or was it unaware?"

1. It is clear that arrests, imprisonments and executions on such a great scale could not have remained unknown to the great majority of the leading members of the party and therefore to the people.

If the party leaders knew and the people knew, they connived or remained passive, either because they were afraid, thought that the security forces were too strong for them or they gave support to the general line of Stalin's actions and felt the excesses had to be passed over. It seems to me necessary to recognise that Stalin had the support of the party apparatus, which to a great extent he had selected and promoted and of the majority of the people. He had this support because as Khruschev said "he did a great deal for the Soviet Union".

But why did the party leaders who supported Stalin, so lightly accept the annihilation of party leaders who had been, with Lenin, the Bolshevik vanguard?

For of the 134 members of the 1934 Central Committee 98 members were executed. The old guard were wiped out by the new guard.

There were bitter divisions inside the party leadership about how to go forward in the critically dangerous situation, and this disunity created fear of intervention from enemies outside.

The background of illegality under Tsarism, civil war and intervention disposed communists to suspect that opponents of the majority line of the party were linked with counter-revolution. So they were willing that the opposition be removed.

But that some communists should be willing to get rid of other communists on such a scale and in such a way, needs explanation.

Style of Work

2. The kind of men, selected and promoted by Stalin to carry out the first Five Year Plan, in their training and outlook were different from the men round Lenin.

They emerged in the main from the underground movement of Tsarist times and from the days of the civil war and intervention. Their preoccupation was construction of a planned socialist economy in industry and agriculture. They became the executives and legislators of a party which administered a centralised plan over one sixth of the world. They became more concerned, they had to be more concerned, with the execution of orders from above, the fulfilment of quotas, than with leading and teaching workers and peasants to take part in running their own affairs. They were too obsessed with the danger of time running out to be aware of the danger within.

These were some of the factors which created a special style of work, a style that lead to administrative violence, suppression of criticism, punishment of failure, removal of opposition.

In a very real sense they were men of "a special mould" working immensely hard, carrying great responsibility, subject to severe penalty if they failed, separated from the people the more they climbed the party ladder and enjoyed the privilege of office.

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One might say that the new type of party leadership was hardly recognisable as members of the party described by Lenin.

Theory and Practice

3. Maurice Dobb has described the pressures which forced the party along these lines, and the members must have been, as Stalin was, aware of it. He revealed his awareness and indeed his discomfort, by writing articles and making speeches about Lenin's conception of the party which bore little or no resemblance to the one he was leading.

The gap between theory and practice, between the idea of a party which was the instrument and organised will of the working class and the apparatus which was the instrument and will of Stalin, had to be covered up. Living conditions, democracy, human relations in the first socialist state had to be presented as the first state of heaven on earth. The party leaders for the sake of the revolution made deceptive propaganda. Largely they deceived the people and the world movement, partly they deceived themselves.

They deceived themselves to the extent that they came to believe that failure, breakdown, demoralisation could not be the fault of the system, of their own leadership, of their inability to tell the truth and consult with the rank and file. Failure and breakdown and demoralisation were evidence of enemies at work, of counter-revolutionary sabotage. This attitude was expressed in a pseudo-theory devised by Stalin to explain the failures and opposition, which the first Five Year Plan encountered.

The theory stated that class struggle increased and intensified as the building of socialism progressed.

It was the doctrinal justification for mass persecution, and once committed to it the party leadership possessed a blank cheque for power to eliminate all possible opposition.

4. However the party leadership could not openly become the instrument of execution of its own members and so along with the doctrinal justification there was developed little by little an apparatus which worked for the party but stood outside and above the party. That absolute power was the secret police.

How and what they did, we know in part. It has nothing to do with the principles of Marxism and Leninism. Why they did it, what kind of men they were we can surmise without access to the records, for we know that organised brutality, seemingly in any kind of society, attracts vile men to do vile work. In theory and practice, the party having monopolised control of the state machine, subordinated itself to the secret police. That is the extent of the deformation from which the movement had to seek its way out.

Road to Socialism

5. Finally, one comes to the question of why the same distortions and violations of communist principles came about in the socialist states of Eastern Europe.

Was that because such phenomena are inherent in the system or because of the special relation with the CPSU?

It was inevitable that in the post-war situation, the new socialist states should have come into existence and remained within the sphere of the Soviet Union and their parties excessively influenced by the CPSU.

The road to socialism therefore in these countries, with the exception of Yugoslavia, meant the Soviet road. They progressed along this road in many cases violating their own history and national circumstances, because of the economic and military strings which bound them to the Soviet Union, but also because in every case they were lead by men who had either been trained in Moscow or owed their position to the support of the Soviet party leadership.

Men like Gottwald of Czechoslovakia and Rakosi of Hungary, acted as they did not because they were cowardly stooges of the Soviet security forces, but because they thought, that the Soviet system was their system and the only model.

In so doing they generated the currents of national feeling which historically run so strongly in formerly oppressed central European countries, and these in turn invoked the ruthless measures of trials and interventions which the CPSU believed preserved its interests.

It is my conviction that the course of the party's development in the Soviet Union and the relations of the parties within the Soviet Union's sphere of legitimate interest, can only be understood and the necessary conclusion drawn, if the world movement including of course our own party believes in itself sufficiently and is confident enough of its future, to face the examination and discussion of the past.

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